

The Lost Trans Generation / 481 Carcinogens and Counting!

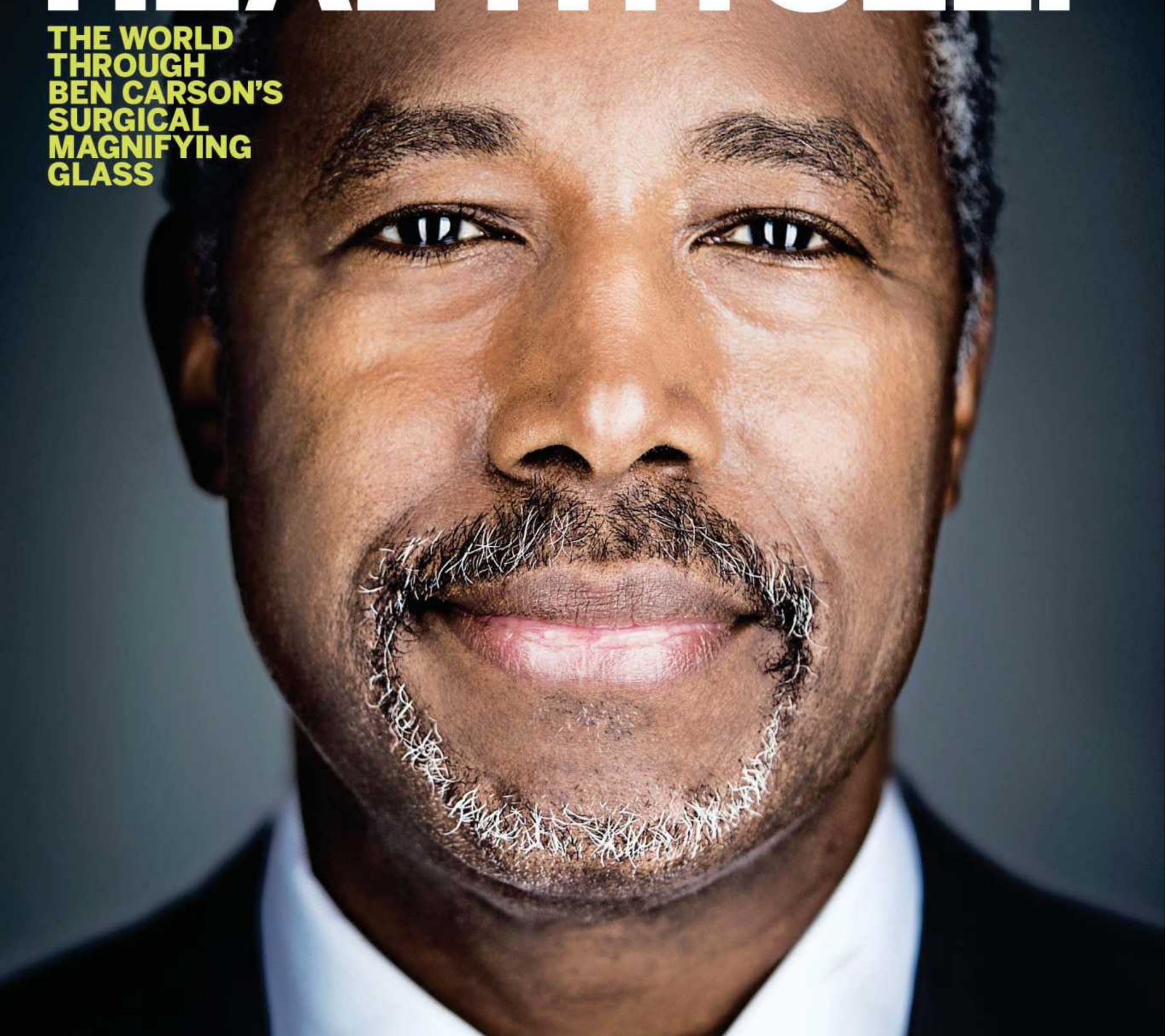
Newsweek

AMERICA,

11.13.2015

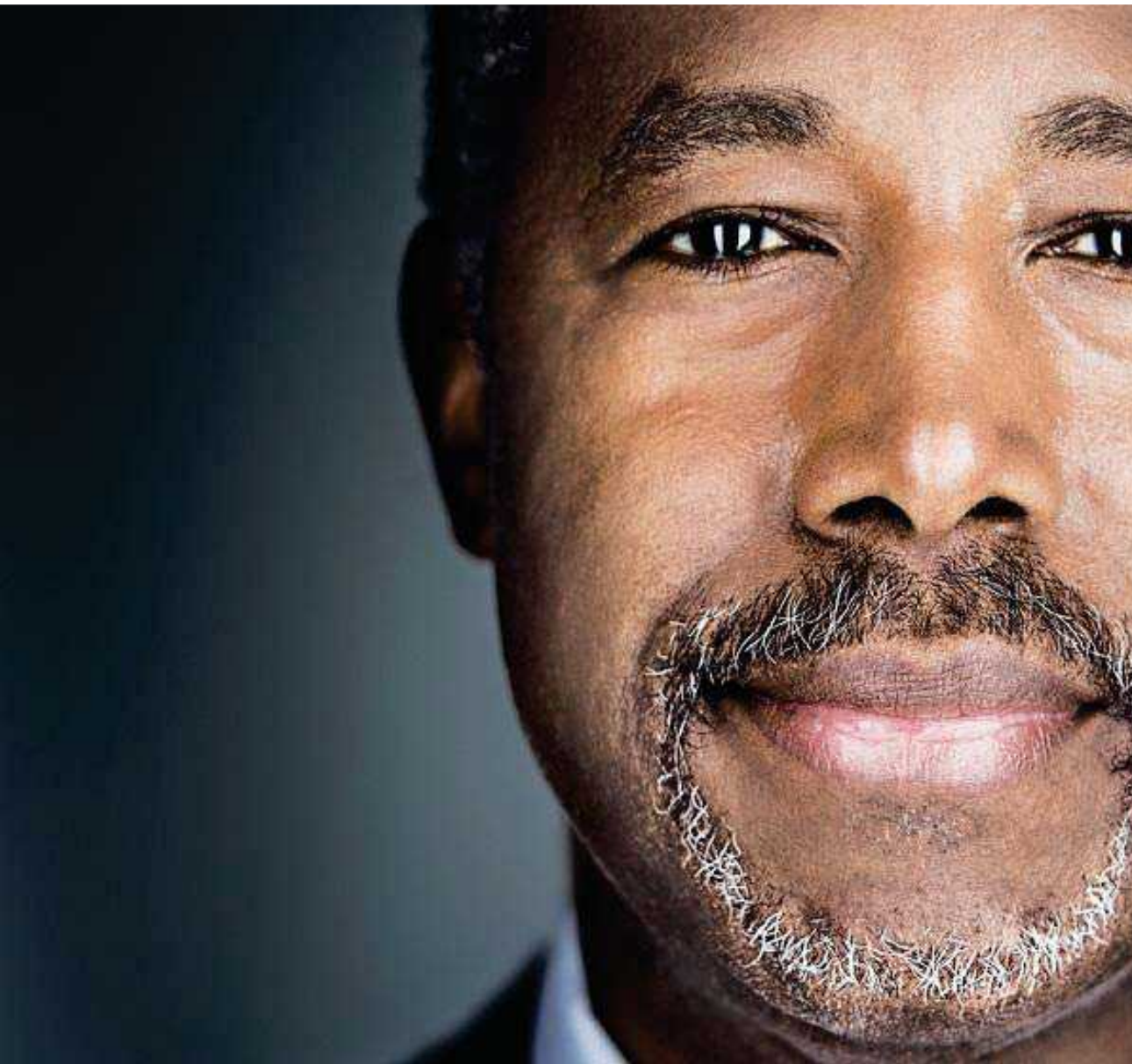
HEALTHYSELF

THE WORLD
THROUGH
BEN CARSON'S
SURGICAL
MAGNIFYING
GLASS



Newsweek

FEATURES



THE WORLD THROUGH BEN CARSON'S SURGICAL MAGNIFYING GLASS

Why does the surging Republican candidate say so many inflammatory things?



*DISBANDED BROTHERS: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN UKRAINE'S
FOREIGN FIGHTERS RETURN HOME*

DOWNLOADS



Newsweek
*REFUGEES RISK
DEATH TRAVELING
THROUGH
EUROPEAN WINTER*



Newsweek
*AMPHETAMINES
FUEL BOTH SIDES
OF THE SYRIAN WAR*



Newsweek
*TWO NUMBERS:
BACON IS
CARCINOGENIC, BUT
SO IS THE AIR YOU
BREATHE*



Newsweek
*THE KREMLIN
KNOWS WHAT
YOU LIKE...ON
FACEBOOK*



Newsweek
*THE LOST U.K.
CHILD ABUSE
TESTIMONIES*



Newsweek
*WALGREENS VS. THE
AMERICAN DREAM*

NEW WORLD



*ANTS ACT LIKE
BOTH LIQUIDS
AND SOLIDS*

DOWNTIME



*'FALLOUT 4'
IS THE MOST
COMPLEX
ENTERTAINMEN
OF OUR DAY,
BUT DOES
THAT MAKE IT
ART?*



*R.L. STINE,
MASTER OF
'90S KID
HORROR,
ENJOYS AN
UNEXPECTED
RENAISSANCE*



*REVISITING
AMERICAN
JOURNALISM'S
BALLSIER DAYS*



*YOU'RE 100
PERCENT
WRONG ABOUT
MONDAYS*



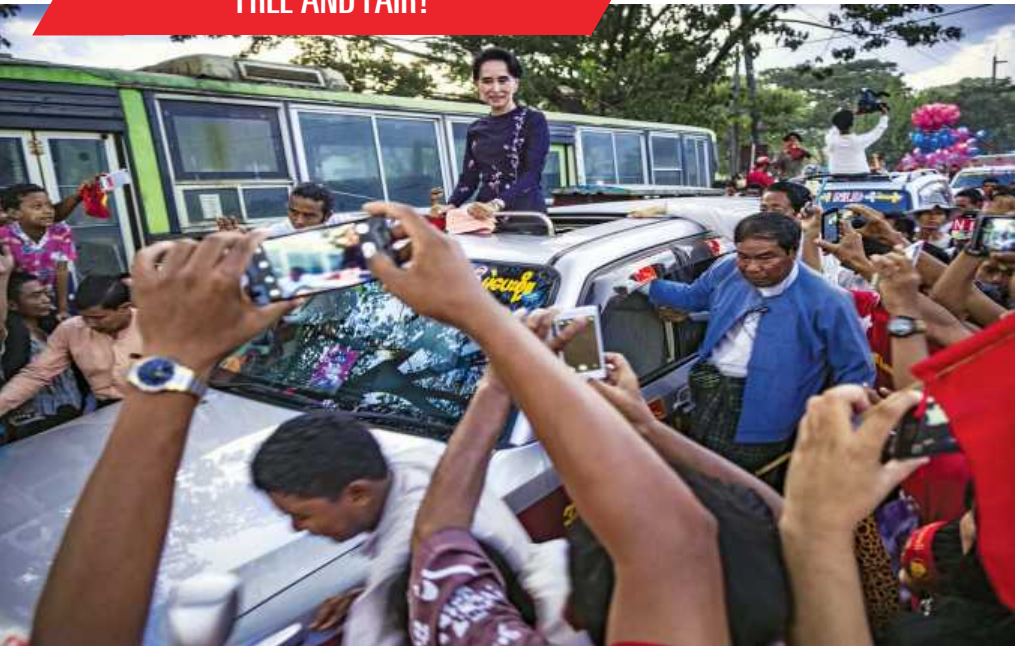
*NOW IS THE
TIME TO VISIT
ZIMBABWE*

BIG SHOTS

EXTERNAL IMPACT?



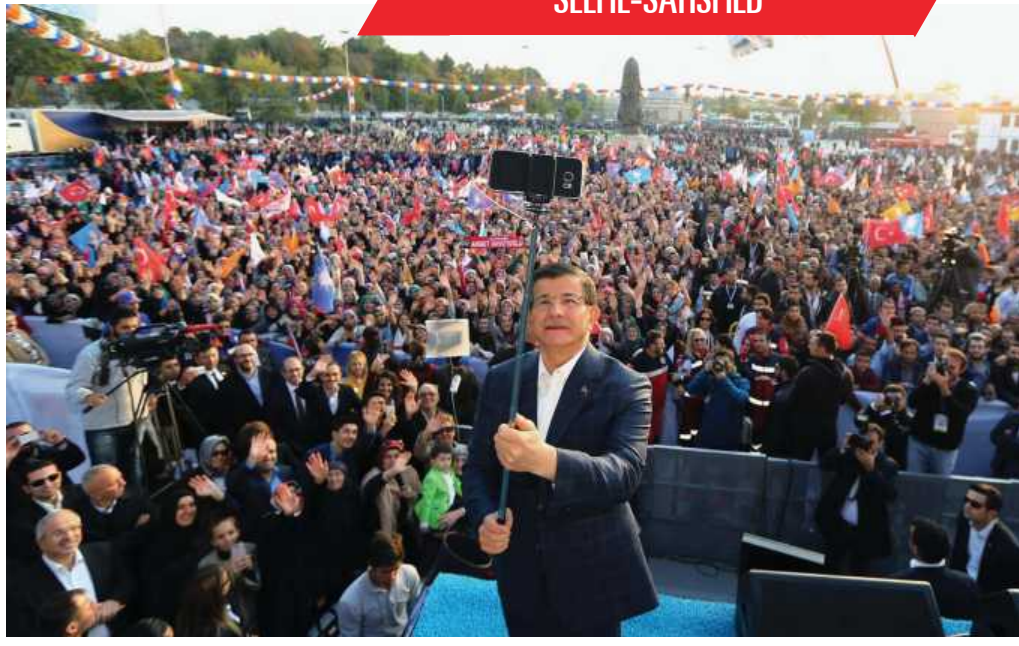
FREE AND FAIR?

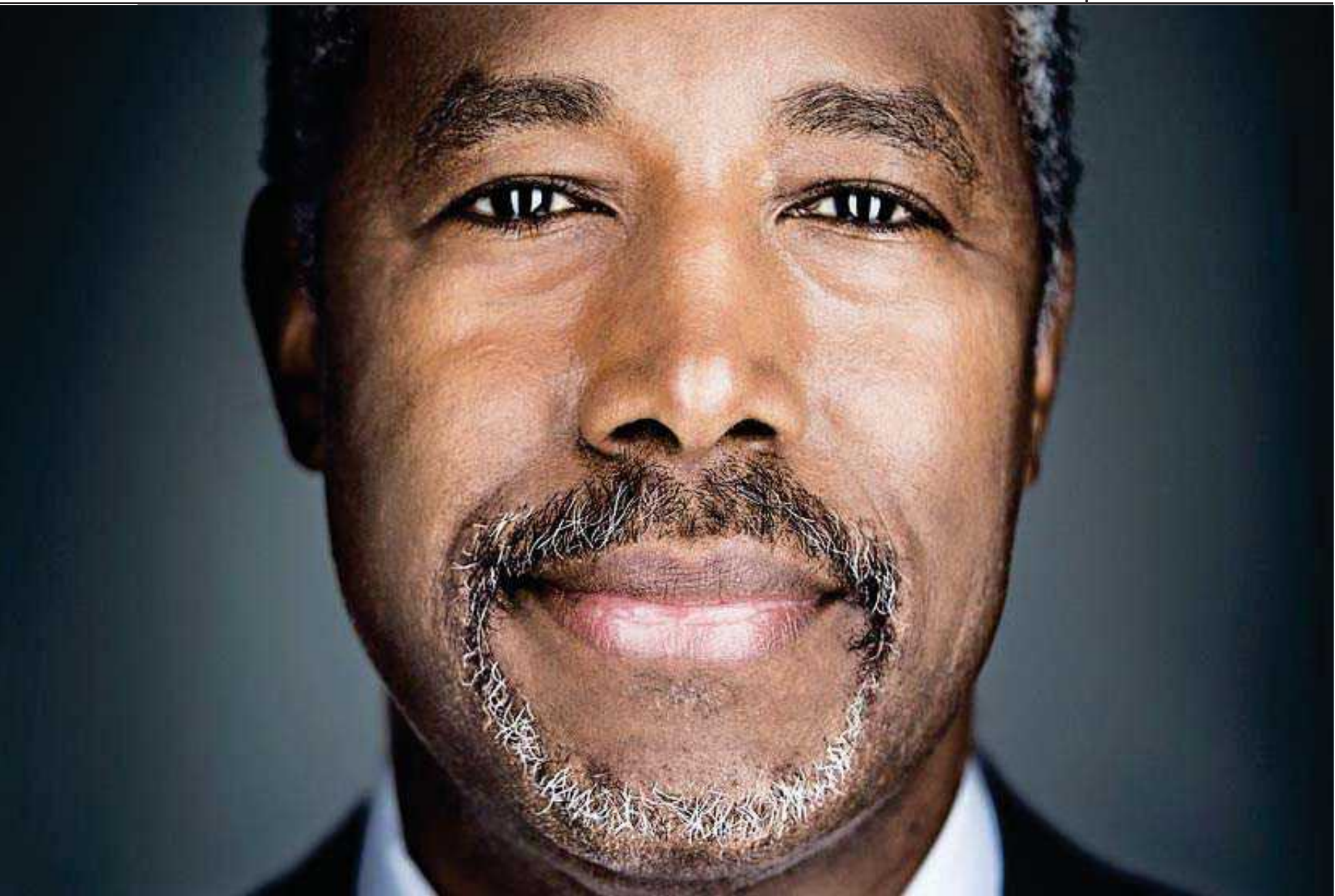


OPEN TABLE



SELFIE-SATISFIED





Newsweek

THE WORLD THROUGH BEN CARSON'S SURGICAL MAGNIFYING GLASS

**WHY DOES THE SURGING REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE SAY
SO MANY INFLAMMATORY THINGS?**

“Now it’s not my intention to offend anyone,” renowned neurosurgeon Ben Carson told a crowd of dignitaries assembled at the Washington Hilton Hotel in 2013. A devout Christian, Carson is surely aware of the proverb about good

intentions and the road to hell. He was speaking at the National Prayer Breakfast, an annual affair that's usually the opposite of edgy—a brief bit of bonhomie (contrived at times) when D.C. puts aside the feuding, at least until the orange juice and coffee have been cleared.

With that opener, it's not surprising Carson's 27-minute speech prompted hosannas as well as head scratching. Most of his remarks focused on his remarkable life story, rising from a Detroit ghetto to become one of the world's most celebrated surgeons. But conservative commentators glommed on to his rant against Obamacare, which came with the president of the United States seated just a few feet from Carson.

Related: [Dr. Ben Carson's Life Story Rests on a Deep Adventist Faith](#)

Carson also took shots at what he called the politically correct media for “crucifying people who say things really quite innocently.” He declared the country is in a death spiral like the one that preceded the collapse of the Roman Empire: “Moral decay, fiscal irresponsibility. They destroyed themselves. If you don't think that can happen to America, you get out your books and you start reading.”



Republican presidential candidate Ben Carson talks to reporters after speaking at the National Press Club in Washington on October 9. Carson credits his faith with not only guiding his life, but also with saving it. Credit:

Jonathan Ernst /Reuters

“Ben Carson for President,” **blared the headline** of a Wall Street Journal editorial later that week.

Two and a half years later, Carson is running for president and doing very well, a political outsider as laid-back as real estate mogul Donald Trump is in your face. Despite their stylistic differences, Carson and Trump are blazing much the same insurgent path in the GOP primary. After creeping up behind Trump in national polls this fall, Carson has now pulled even or surged ahead in two of the latest surveys, and is leading several polls in Iowa. The doctor’s surge has been as stunning as it has been stealthy. As Trump’s shock-and-awe campaign transfixes the media and the chattering classes, the mild-mannered Marylander, 64, has been quietly building support among conservative voters with his unorthodox and decidedly un-PC appeal.

The retired director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins Hospital has expressed regret for some of the jaw-dropping things he’s said—like suggesting serving time in

prison can make you gay. But he's stood by other comments: arguing that a Muslim president would feel compelled to obey Sharia (Islamic law), not American law; suggesting that the Nazis wouldn't have been able to carry out the Holocaust if German Jews had been armed; or equating abortion and slavery.

Those comments have drawn national headlines and a heated backlash. But even more than outrage, Carson's campaign has provoked bewilderment: How can someone who has such a sparkling scientific résumé make assertions that are so obviously lacking in evidence, the basic building block of scientific study? The gentle, even languid tone in which Carson delivers his controversial views only deepens the contradiction.

In the Victorian-era classic *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a genial research scientist consumes a potion that turns him into a beast. Longtime friends and colleagues of Carson's witness a version of that when they see him on TV these days. "I happened to be watching *Meet the Press* when he said [he would not support a Muslim president], and my family was upset," says Harold Doley, a prominent African-American Republican and personal friend of Carson's. He urged them to "give Dr. Carson an opportunity to clarify and expand on his position," which he did in a flurry of subsequent interviews, though he never fully retracted his initial statement. Doley insists Carson "is not opposed to people based on their religious beliefs."



Pediatric neurosurgeon and 2016 presidential candidate Dr. Ben Carson is surging in the polls and has overtaken Donald Trump in recent polling. Credit: Brian Cahn/Corbis

For those who knew him as a doctor and philanthropist, Carson's new career as a politician has been disorienting. Associates of Trump have always known him as a showman, a tornado of hype. By contrast, friends of Carson say the image that's emerged in the national media is not who he really is. It's not that they were unaware that he was conservative and Christian, embracing a long tradition of self-reliance in the African-American community. These are values, his friends acknowledge, that he has unabashedly embraced since he was a young man beginning his medical career. Carson's colleagues at Johns Hopkins, one of the nation's pre-eminent medical schools, don't squirm when he proclaims that the world was created in six days, per his Seventh-day Adventist faith, but they struggle mightily with the intolerant zealot being portrayed on cable news, whom they say does not resemble the man they worked with day in and day out for so many years. A man who, yes,

was unwavering in his beliefs and unconventional in his approach—but was always humble, constructive and, above all, respectful.

Related: With Soft-Spoken Style, Ben Carson Catches Donald Trump in Iowa

“In real life, he is the most unbiased person I’ve ever met,” says Dr. Henry Brem, director of the neurosurgery department at Johns Hopkins Hospital and a colleague of Carson’s since the 1980s. Brem and others say Carson has a knack for unifying and rallying people—an important skill for a president. “To do innovative things and to break barriers and bring people together—and have everybody pulling in the same direction and get funding to do things—I do think is an extraordinary administrative skill,” says Brem. “How that translates [into running the country] is anybody’s speculation.” But Carson’s career success is based on far more than what went on in the operating room.

At the root of Carson’s worldview is his relationship with God. Carson has belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist Church since he was a Detroit teen with an explosive temper, and he credits Christ with helping him control his anger. The religion’s emphasis on living a moral, industrious life and hewing to a fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible explain many of Carson’s contradictions. Adventists are a Protestant denomination, and though they are not part of the evangelical movement, they share similar beliefs in terms of respecting biblical authority and conducting religious outreach. They are literalists about creation being a six-day affair. A recent [survey by the Pew Research Center](#) found that 60 percent of white evangelicals likewise reject evolution (as do 47 percent of black Protestants).

The Adventist Church’s world headquarters is just outside Washington, D.C., in Silver Spring, Maryland, which is also the home of a particularly bustling congregation—the Spencerville Seventh-day Adventist Church, which Carson and his family attend. On a recent

Saturday morning, the sprawling stone church was overflowing. Despite the blustery weather outside, the main hall felt warm and welcoming, buzzing with a low, cheerful hum as worshippers milled about and families quietly filed into the nave, looking for empty seats in the pews. It felt much like any other Christian church service, except, of course, it was a Saturday, which is when Adventists mark the Sabbath.

Befitting its location in the diverse, middle-class suburb, Spencerville's congregation that Saturday was a mosaic of senior citizens, teenagers, infants, whites, blacks, South Asians and Latinos. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is the most racially diverse faith in the country, according to Pew, yet another reminder that Carson has been immersed in multicultural environments throughout his adult life. In the presidential race, however, he's playing almost exclusively to white evangelicals, a powerful force in GOP primaries, yes, but just a narrow slice of the general electorate. Even some of his supporters are frustrated by that, given his background and race. "There needs to be outreach to the African-American community," says Doley. "I've been trying to get that point across to the campaign, with very little to no success."

Carson has spent almost all of his adult life in Maryland working at Johns Hopkins University, the elite medical school and hospital system located in majority-black Baltimore. Hopkins is where he rocketed from being a serious, young neurosurgery intern in the '80s (and the rare African-American surgeon at the time) to one of the leading pediatric neurosurgeons in the world, making a name for himself with groundbreaking surgeries such as separating Siamese twins, and rehabilitating children with rare, degenerative brain disorders. His memoir, *Gifted Hands*, was made into a 2009 TV movie starring Cuba Gooding Jr. It was followed by a slew of other, more politically minded books.



As a pediatric neurosurgeon, Carson was known for his bedside manner and ability to rally his co-workers at Johns Hopkins Hospital around a cause. Carson regularly brought his faith into the operating theater, praying with patients and his surgical teams. Credit: Ricky Carioti/The Washington Post/Getty

Carson's emphasis on personal integrity and responsibility has been a constant feature of his life, say those who know him well. Brem, a close friend, calls the 2013 prayer breakfast speech "a typical Ben speech." He recalls confrontational remarks Carson gave at an NAACP awards gala in 2006, where he was being recognized with the group's highest honor for achievement. After receiving the award, Carson "acknowledged that everything he achieved had been done on the shoulders of the civil rights movement." Then, as Brem describes it, he began to "dress down" all its leaders in the room, "saying, 'You're not doing enough. We need to help ourselves.'"

Related: Ben Carson Once Studied Fetal Brain Tissue, Now Calls the Research 'Disturbing'

Conservatives have eaten that rhetoric up, embracing Carson as the ideal foil to President Barack Obama. Media

baron Rupert Murdoch even suggested on Twitter last month that Carson would be “a real black president,” something he later apologized for. Carson’s own remarks in recent years **likening Obamacare to slavery** and claiming the president has **hurt race relations** in America have alienated many in the black community, who lionized the doctor’s groundbreaking medical achievements and philanthropy. But it seems clear, looking back, that the underlying philosophy was always in Carson’s work, if not expressed in such polarizing language. “Ever since I’ve known him, he has been strongly in favor of the individual, individual liberties, individual responsibilities to be the best they can be,” says Dr. Donlin Long, chairman of the Johns Hopkins Department of Neurosurgery from 1973 to 2000 and a longtime mentor to Carson.

That applied to Carson’s work in his community, a priority from the time he first arrived at Hopkins. In his interview for a slot in the neurosurgery residency program, Long recalls the young Carson, then a medical student at the University of Michigan, asking for assurances he could take time off to give talks to schoolchildren in inner-city Baltimore. He was “the only person to ever ask that in an interview,” Long says, laughing.

“When I came to Hopkins, black doctors were extraordinarily rare, particularly in an academic setting,” Carson tells Newsweek. “I realized that what I would be doing could be very inspirational to a lot of kids...who frequently had, as I did, many people telling you what you can’t do and not enough people telling them what they can do.”

So Carson became a proselytizer as well as a physician, taking his message of self-improvement to classrooms around Baltimore and, before long, to the entire country. “On weekends he went away, and the rest of us covered for him,” Brem recalls. “And what he did was, he went into the inner city...every weekend, all over the country. He did that

for years and years and years, and eventually that led to the Carson Scholars.” Brem was one of the first board members for the charity, which gives scholarships to elementary and high school students around the U.S. to recognize academic excellence and community service.

Even as Carson worked to lift up inner-city children, he did not emphasize race or ethnicity. The Carson Scholars Fund, established in 1996, is open to any student in any participating school district. It’s always been Carson’s desire “to bring people together and not be divisive on race,” explains Nancy Grasmick, the charity’s interim president.

He’s also rejected a focus on race in his life. When Carson was still a resident, Long recalls approaching his protégé about applying for a National Institutes of Health program for minority doctors. “It was a very nice amount of money that would support their careers and support some additional research,” Long recounts. “And Ben said, ‘Dr. Long, that’s the only insulting thing you’ve ever said to me.’”



President George W. Bush presents a Presidential Medal of Freedom to Carson for his work with neurological disorders during an East Room ceremony on June 19, 2008 at the White House in Washington, D.C. Carson was a pioneering surgeon in the operating room and outside it, and set up a foundation to help youths of all races pursue their academic goals. Credit: Alex Wong/Getty

For many African-Americans, Carson's de-emphasis of skin color and his tendency to invoke slavery as a parallel for a variety of current political controversies—he's compared it to not just abortion but also to Obamacare—have soured them on the doctor. "Academically, he always been a pillar within our community," says Jamal Bryant, the pastor at Baltimore's Empowerment Temple. "His work really is well-known and highly celebrated." Carson even got a shoutout in Season 4 of the iconic HBO series *The Wire*, when a grade school student in inner-city Baltimore **tells his teacher**, "I want to be a pediatric neurosurgeon like that one nigger."

But Bryant, an outspoken civil rights activist, also criticizes Carson's silence on racial discrimination. "He has

not spoken, really, to the injustices that we face right here in Maryland,” says Bryant, who gave the eulogy for Freddie Gray, the 25-year-old from Baltimore whose death in police custody this past spring sparked days of protests and riots. “Every schoolchild in the last 15 years or so has learned who Ben Carson is. That’s a natural constituency” for his presidential campaign, says Doley. “Unfortunately, another natural constituency you might think, would be the African-American constituency. But it’s not there.”

Given Carson’s academic background, one might think that intellectuals could be a political constituency as well. But many of his highly educated peers have struggled with his rejection of mainstream science, including the Big Bang theory and the overwhelming evidence of climate change. A recent piece in *The New Yorker*, titled “Ben Carson’s Scientific Ignorance,” noted that in a 2012 speech, Carson “made statements...that suggest he never learned or chooses to ignore basic, well-tested scientific concepts.”

Related: CNBC Alters Debate Format After Trump and Carson Complain

Here, too, Carson’s contacts from his life before politics say none of this is new, and the political uproar has led to a caricature of the doctor. Academics, laments Long, have become “quite intolerant.” People have forgotten, he says, that “the whole basis of science is questioning the basis of scientific principles. That either generates the truth, such as they are at the time. Or it will generate strong criticism and perhaps stronger hypotheses.”

Dr. George Jallo, director of the Johns Hopkins All Children’s Institute for Brain Protection Sciences, worked under Carson for a decade and considers him a mentor. Jallo tells *Newsweek* that Carson’s religious beliefs made him respect the senior neurosurgeon more. “Here he is as a physician, he has a very good foundation of science and also is a religious man,” Jallo says. “His beliefs were thoughtful in the sense that he had a good understanding

of both.” Carson’s former colleagues aren’t the only people in medicine who aren’t bothered by his beliefs: Health professionals represented the largest single group of professionals donating to his campaign thus far, **according to the Center for Responsive Politics**.

Jallo says Carson was notably open, though not doctrinaire, about his religious faith. “He wasn’t afraid to talk about it, and he respected others, so they respected him for that,” Jallo recalls. “He’d pray with them if they wanted to pray with him.” That’s confirmed by one of Carson’s patients, Beth Usher, who was just 7 when she underwent a risky operation to try to cure her chronic seizures. At that time, in the 1980s, Carson and his colleagues were the one team of doctors in the United States performing the procedure, known as a hemispherectomy, where the damaged part of the brain is permanently removed. The night before the surgery, Usher and her family, particularly her 9-year-old brother, were “petrified,” she tells Newsweek. Carson noticed and “took my brother down to the little hospital chapel and prayed with him for like an hour,” Usher recalls. “It was who he was,” says Jallo. “Religion made him who he was.”

Carson’s longtime colleagues have a harder time making sense of some of the social views he has expressed on the campaign trail. The most recent furor was over remarks he made in the wake of a mass shooting at a community college in Oregon. Asked on Fox News what he would have done in the same situation, Carson replied, “I would not just stand there and let him shoot me. I would say, ‘Hey guys, everybody attack him.’” Media commentators promptly attacked him, saying he was criticizing the victims.

Then there was that aforementioned Muslim slight on NBC’s Meet the Press this September. “I would not advocate that we put a Muslim in charge of this nation. I absolutely would not agree with that,” Carson told host Chuck Todd. And in a March CNN interview, Carson said

that homosexuality is a choice because people “go into prison straight and when they come out, they're gay.” The doctor later apologized and said he did “not pretend to know how every individual came to their sexual orientation.”

That kind of campaign rhetoric belies Carson's personable nature and respect for people of all backgrounds, according to people who know and worked with him. They say those traits, even more than his dexterity with scalpels and drills, are what made him an exceptional surgeon. “Ben had a remarkable ability to bring...people together, mainly because he was never interested in his own reputation,” Long says. That's a rare trait in the high-octane, ego-driven world of surgery, and one that made Carson very popular with his peers.

Jallo says he can vouch for that, recounting Carson's preparations for the 2004 surgery to separate 13-month-old Siamese twins born joined at the head Lea and Tabea Block, in Lemgo, Germany. Carson first gained fame almost two decades earlier, when as a 30-something neurosurgeon he directed the 70-person medical team that successfully separated another German pair of conjoined twins, Benjamin and Patrick Binder. But he was no less meticulous this time around. Carson brought the whole team of doctors and support staff together to rehearse the procedure and seek out suggestions. He was listening to everyone, “from the electrician” (to discuss contingency plans for a power outage) “to the biomedical engineers to the cleaning person,” Jallo says. “That's very unusual in my experience—there aren't very many leaders who have enough confidence in themselves that they open themselves to everyone in their team.”

With patients, Carson was known for his comforting bedside manner, earning him the nickname “Gentle Ben.” He worked with very sick children, a difficult field but one he didn't shy away from. “I remember him actually getting down on his knees to talk to me at my eye level,” says

Usher, who is now 35. She and Carson continue to exchange letters, and she sees him at an annual reunion that brings together fellow hemispherectomy patients.



Many of Carson's friends say he's generous and tolerant, and don't recognize the man portrayed on the campaign trail. Credit: Aaron P. Bernstein/Redux

Though Carson has angered gay rights advocates with his opposition to same-sex marriage and his comment about gays in prison, Brem points out that when Carson was head of Johns Hopkins's Department of Pediatric Neurosurgery, he trained and mentored openly gay residents, as well as a whole mix of people of other backgrounds and orientations. "He has no prejudice or bias in his own life," Brem insists.

How, then, does one explain the divisive persona he's assumed as a politician? Carson sees no contradiction. "My approach is that people are people, and that's why...I don't speak on race very often," he tells Newsweek. "The skin doesn't make them who they are, the hair doesn't make them who they are. The brain does."

As for his concern about a Muslim president, Carson has clarified that he'd accept a Muslim leader if he or she rejected Sharia. "To me, it has nothing to do with faith, it has

to do with a lifestyle,” Carson explains. “Islam is more than just religion. It’s a lifestyle, and it does not accommodate separation of mosque and state.”

Doley says Carson’s original comment “was very troubling.” It even prompted him to reach out to close friends who are Muslim, to caution them not to jump to conclusions. But he says Carson’s subsequent explanations have reassured him and other supporters. “Ben is not a bigot; Ben is a great thinker,” Doley says. However, “he does not think in sound bites, and he can’t be expected to speak in sound bites.”

Other friends have come up with similar explanations for the disconnect with what they hear on the campaign trail. Brem hypothesizes that his friend gets himself “trapped” in statements he doesn’t mean. But it’s clearly something Brem is struggling with, pausing as he tries to gather his thoughts. “It’s hard to explain,” he says of the dichotomy between the doctor he knows and the politician. “It’s painful to me.”



AP Photo/Sergei Chuzavkov

DISBANDED BROTHERS: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN UKRAINE'S FOREIGN FIGHTERS RETURN HOME

**NEITHER GOVERNMENTS NOR FAMILIES KNOW QUITE
WHAT TO DO WITH THE RETURNING SOLDIERS.**

On the morning of February 27, a 28-year-old Spaniard named Sergio Becerra Vasquez was just starting to get

dressed when he heard a loud banging on the front door of his house in the Vallecas neighborhood of Madrid. Almost in the same moment, he heard male voices on the street: “Police! Open up! Open up!” Vasquez was terrified and did nothing, but the men would not go away. He put the safety chain on his door, opened it slightly and peered through. Seven men in civilian clothes stood outside. One asked if they could enter. “I want to see some ID,” Vasquez said. The men obliged. The badges showed them to be Spanish counterterrorism police. Vasquez unhooked the chain.

The officers came in and told Vasquez he was under arrest. He was charged, they said, with possessing arms and explosives, complicity in murders and assassinations, and influencing the neutrality of Spain. The police led away Vasquez in handcuffs and drove him to the General Information Office, a unit of the National Police that deals with counterterrorism. There, he was placed in a row of chairs next to two friends of his. “Don’t speak to each other. Don’t even look at each other,” an officer told them. They sat in silence until an officer took Vasquez into a separate room, where he was interrogated for over three hours. “Where are the arms?” his inquisitor demanded. “How many people have you killed?” A lawyer arrived to witness his deposition, and then the lawyer and four police officers took Vasquez back to his home to search the premises.



Sergio Becerra Vasquez, far left, fought with separatist against Ukraine along with other Spanish and Serbian fighters on the Vergulovka front. Upon his return to Spain, Vasquez was arrested by the nation's counterterrorism unit for his involvement in the conflict. Credit: Sergio Becerra Vasquez

When they arrived, a crowd of journalists were waiting in the street outside; they had heard that the police had arrested eight men for participating in a foreign conflict. But Vasquez and the seven other suspects were not the sort of foreign fighters Europeans have become accustomed to seeing counterterrorism police lead away in handcuffs. The men had not returned from Syria or Iraq but from a war within Europe—in Ukraine. They had traveled to join the separatist rebels on the battlefields of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine in what they considered selfless acts of conscience. Vasquez believed himself to be fulfilling the same obligation as the foreigners who decades earlier made the journey to Spain to fight against the fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War. Now his government was accusing him of serious crimes. Vasquez believes he was caught after pro-Kremlin Russian media, which support

the rebels, featured him and others to show that despite the European Union opposing the separatists, EU citizens were fighting for them. Not that the press are solely to blame: During their time in Ukraine, Vasquez and his comrades posted a number of photos on social media, which Spain's interior ministry later used as evidence.

The police didn't find anything of note in Vasquez's house, but they bagged up his phone, some of his military uniforms and other souvenirs from the war. Unable to secure a warrant to detain him further, the officers drove him back to their headquarters and officially released him. Soon after, Vasquez received a letter summoning him to Spain's National Court, where a judge questioned him. Seven months later, Vasquez hasn't heard any more from the police. He doesn't know where his case stands, but he suspects the investigation is ongoing.

If Vasquez is confused about how his government sees him, that's largely because Europe's judicial and political bodies seem largely at a loss for what to do about the estimated 600 foreigners, excluding Russians, who have fought on both sides of the war in Ukraine. Most European governments have spent considerable time and resources on addressing citizens who have come back from fighting with jihadi groups in Syria and Iraq—policies vary from assertive prosecution to more liberal rehabilitation programs—but few, if any, countries appear to have clear policies on how to deal with the Ukrainian war's foreign fighters. To date, Spain is the only Western European country to have arrested people for fighting in the Ukrainian conflict. Across Europe, these men, who may have killed and seen terrible violence, generally just buy a seat on a flight home, pass through immigration without questioning and slot back into their communities.



Fighters from the Azov volunteer battalion ignite flares during the march marking the 72nd anniversary of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Kiev, Ukraine on October 14, 2014. The Ukrainian Insurgent Army initially collaborated with the Nazis, believing Hitler would grant Ukraine independence, but then went on to fight both Nazi forces and the Red Army.

Credit: Sergei Chuzavkov/AP

Foreigner Fight Club

Experts and historians agree that ignoring these foreign combatants and hoping they'll quietly reintegrate is a high-risk approach. While these men generally lack the animus toward their own governments that some returnees from conflicts in Syria and Iraq may hold, their exposure to violence, trauma and the murderous lawlessness of a brutal civil war is contributing to the fracturing of families and social bonds and untreated mental health problems. "To the extent that foreign fighters are isolated from society, they become more dangerous," says Jeremy Shapiro, fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy and the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution, a public policy organization in Washington, D.C.

The varied backgrounds, motivations and experiences of these men—the foreign fighters in Ukraine are overwhelmingly male—pose a challenge to governments trying to formulate a centralized approach. Those in Ukraine are neither terrorists nor mercenaries nor humanitarian volunteers. They also have no clear, shared ideology. They come from a range of countries, backgrounds and professions, and they are helping both sides in the conflict. Their political views range from the far left to the extreme right. In eastern Ukraine, some foreign communists —like Vasquez—are fighting on the side of the pro-Russian rebels. In direct contrast to the prevailing view in Europe and beyond, they see Ukraine, not Russia, as a fascist aggressor. Meanwhile, some neo-Nazis from EU countries have joined the Ukrainian army, which the EU and the United States support. And some foreign volunteers don't have any interest in politics at all; they just want to fight in a war.

But the war may have run its course. Since September 1, Ukrainian government forces and pro-Russian rebels have largely been observing a cease-fire, prompting some to down their weapons and declare the conflict over. As the Ukrainian fighters return to their towns and families, so too are many of Europe's foreign combatants heading back to theirs. For Vasquez and others, that homecoming has been hard.



Chris Garrett fires his pistol during a training session in Ukraine. Garrett, a 31-year-old British tree surgeon, fought alongside the Ukrainian army from October 2014 to April 2015. Credit: Chris Garrett

‘Swastikas on the Walls’

Chris Garrett, a 31-year-old British tree surgeon, knows what it’s like to shoot a man dead. He also knows what it’s like to then sail through immigration without question. And he knows how much damage the choice to fight in someone else’s war can do to one’s mental health and the relationships one cherishes the most.

Garrett fought alongside the Ukrainian army from October 2014 to April 2015. Unlike Vasquez, Garrett didn’t participate in the conflict because of his political ideals. His dream since the age of 12, when he first joined the Army Cadet Force—a voluntary youth organization set up by the British army and Ministry of Defense—was to be a soldier. At 16, he left school and enrolled in Britain’s Army Foundation College, which trains 16- and 17-year-olds to become future soldiers. While at the college, he suffered a serious physical attack, details of which Garrett prefers not to discuss. The assault prompted him to cut short his service and return home. He never achieved his goal of becoming a soldier. On December 29, 2003, Garrett attempted to rob a gas station and was subsequently convicted and imprisoned

for 19 months. His criminal record ruined his chances of joining the British army or from getting private security work. An injury that shattered his left heel ruled out the French Foreign Legion—the French army’s legendary force made up of foreign nationals.



Garrett, who says he always wanted to be a soldier but missed his chance with the British Army, volunteered for a rebel group in Myanmar before serving as a marksman for the Azov Battalion. Credit: Chris Garrett

In 2008, he made his way to the border of Thailand and Myanmar to join the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), a rebel group whose goal is to establish an autonomous state in Myanmar for the ethnic Karen people. Garrett bounced between his home on Britain’s Isle of Man and Myanmar. He assisted with training, rebuilding projects and land mine clearance, but fighting wasn’t an option. Then, in August 2014, a friend in Ukraine, whom he had met online, suggested that he join the battalions there. “When I realized everything in Ukraine had kicked off,” Garrett says, “I thought, I’m in the right mindset; I might as well go.” He

didn't expect to be involved in fighting, but Garrett did think he could help with removing munitions.

His Ukrainian friend was doing paperwork for the Azov Battalion, a volunteer group fighting alongside the Ukrainian army. Some of the battalion's members have far-right or neo-Nazi connections; its logo bears a striking resemblance to the Wolfsangel, a heraldic symbol often used by the Nazis. Garrett had known of the group's reputation but thought he should find out for himself if it was deserved. "When I got into Azov's place in Kiev, it was kind of like walking into a rundown boarding school," he recalls. "There were swastikas on the walls, and you could stereotype the people as right-wing nationalists." Garrett says he is not right-wing or a Nazi sympathizer. Politically, he says, he doesn't really know where he stands.

His duties in the battalion changed constantly. After a week and a half in Kiev, he moved to a training base near the eastern port city of Mariupol. There, along with a fluctuating group of foreigners, he trained in basic military maneuvers for four weeks. Once that was over, Garrett participated in reconnaissance missions and largely served as a marksman and bomb disposal technician for the team of foreigners.



Garrett provides sniper support to the artillery team during a firefight in Ukraine. "We were shot up for 30 minutes just after this photo was taken," he tells Newsweek. "The enemy are in the woods about 300m behind the farm. This was my first contact in Ukraine." Credit: Chris Garrett

Garrett finally experienced the full brutality of war on February 13. The events of that day and the fighting that followed traumatized him and convinced him that it was time to leave eastern Ukraine. At dawn, almost the entire Azov Battalion, around 250 to 300 people, moved into the village of Shyrokyne in a bid to clear it of separatists. The militia members' instructions, Garrett says, "were to hold Shyrokyne to the last man." Ordered to provide sniper support, Garrett waited in a house facing enemy lines. At 5:30 a.m., he heard an enemy tank nearby. Then the shelling began. For 30 minutes, tank shells and rockets battered the front two rows of houses of the part of the city the battalion was holding. Some of the shells hit the house where Garrett was stationed. He ran down to the basement to take cover, but the attack continued, so he ran outside.

The Ukrainian forces decided to pull back and create a new defensive line. With eight other men, Garrett hid behind the back of another house. All of a sudden, an enemy tank rumbled around the corner, coming within 50 feet of the men. "I just froze," Garrett says. In the pandemonium that

ensued, his fellow soldiers abandoned him, scrambling to get away from the advancing rebels. Desperately needing shelter, Garrett ran for a nearby house, but as he turned the corner he ran into a separatist. Garrett didn't hesitate; raising his rifle, he shot the man at point-blank range. Otherwise, he says, "he was going to shoot me." It was the first and only time Garrett is sure that he killed someone. But given his involvement in other firefights, he expects his total death toll is higher. Garrett, along with another Ukrainian soldier, eventually made it back to safety, reaching the Ukrainian forces in the early hours of February 15.



Garrett poses with other foreign fighters for a "team photo" in February. Credit: Chris Garrett

The Cost of Killing

In mid-April, exhausted, Garrett left Ukraine. "I needed a break," he says. "And I felt if I didn't come home, my relationship [with my girlfriend] would be destroyed." Unlike Vasquez, there was no dramatic arrest awaiting Garrett. Before he returned, he says, he tried to contact Britain's Home Office and the country's two main

intelligence agencies—MI5 and MI6—wanting to know where he stood. But, he says, they didn't reply, and he has heard nothing from them since his return. Citing security reasons, the U.K. Home Office, which also represents MI5, and the U.K. Foreign Office, which represents MI6, declined to comment as to whether Garrett's claims that he reached out to them are true. A Home Office official tells *Newsweek* only that foreign fighters returning from Ukraine are assessed individually, depending on what they did there.

A different situation awaits those returning from Syria—governments closely monitor these individuals. “If we're only looking at the Islamist radicals and not those coming back from Ukraine, we might be missing something,” says Kacper Rekawek, an analyst at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. The wars in the former Yugoslavia offer numerous examples of how disruptive foreign fighters can be when they come home. One returnee, a Swedish-Liberian man named Jackie Arklöv, went on to be convicted for the killing of two policemen in a bank robbery. Bolivian police shot a second, Hungarian-Bolivian Eduardo Rózsa-Flores, whom they suspected of being part of a terrorist group plotting to assassinate President Evo Morales.



Fighters from the Social Nationalist Assembly, part of the ultra-nationalist Right Sector movement, take part in a ceremony at their headquarters in Kiev June 3, 2014, before heading to Eastern Ukraine as part of the Azov battalion. Volunteers on both sides of the Ukraine conflict don't draw the same attention governments give fighters returning from the Syrian conflict, but many of them are being monitored, and some have been arrested. Credit: Valentyn Ogirenko/Reuters

Garrett hasn't had any run-ins with the law since his return. But, he says, "Ukraine has definitely left a mark on me." When he returned to the U.K., a doctor diagnosed him with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and he says he feels isolated. "There is no one to talk to about it. No one can relate," he says. While he has support from friends who are ex-military, his other friends don't agree with his decision to fight in a foreign war.

Garrett's girlfriend, who asked that her name not be published, struggled with her partner's return. It was early in their relationship that Garrett announced he was going to Ukraine. She opposed the idea, even more so when she found out which group he had joined. "I personally don't understand why you would choose to affiliate yourself with a battalion like Azov," she says. While Garrett was away,

she retreated into herself; family and friends condemned her new boyfriend's actions and said they had lost respect for her. "I find it hard to justify why I stayed with him," she says. "Like it or not, I do love him, and I do see the good in him, even if I think he has been more than a little misguided in this instance."

When Garrett first returned, she wasn't able to discuss what he had done. He was struggling with PTSD and was withdrawn and difficult, she says. "I tried to be there emotionally," she says, "but it is draining." The couple is now preparing to set up a small organic farm, and she is studying for a degree in international development. Though things are better, she says her relationship with family and friends has been damaged; her mother still won't speak to Garrett, so vehemently does she disagree with his going to Ukraine.



Garrett trained with Azov members during firearm and maneuver drills. Credit: Chris Garrett

As for Vasquez, when he returned to Spain the day before Christmas Eve, he found that adjusting to normal life,

away from the frenzy of war, wasn't easy. He moved back into his grandmother's former home, a sparsely furnished three-bedroom apartment. Fireworks that marked Madrid's Christmas celebrations made him think he was back in eastern Ukraine. When he walked the streets of the city, he still feared an enemy soldier might shoot him. "I didn't have anything when I came back. I didn't have a job. I couldn't get unemployment benefit. I had to live with my siblings." Suffering with feelings of isolation, Vasquez says he felt "angry with everything and nothing." The counterterrorism police arrested Vasquez two months after his return. Following their visit, unable to find work and facing mounting financial problems, he uploaded his résumé to a couple of EU-wide job sites. In August, he received a call offering him a job painting cars in Belgium, which is why he now lives alone in an apartment in Ghent.

Neither Vasquez nor Garrett intend to remain in Europe. For the sake of his relationship, Garrett isn't planning on returning to Ukraine, but he says he will travel to Myanmar sometime next year and help the KNLA with rebuilding projects and removal of explosive devices. Vasquez has a different reason for not going back to Ukraine: He doesn't want to be sent to prison. Spanish law forbids its citizens from engaging in conflicts that might influence the neutrality of Spain. The punishment for this, according to the Spanish penal code, is a prison term of four to eight years if convicted. If he returns to Ukraine, Vasquez is convinced he'll be locked up the moment he steps foot in Spain. "You can annoy the state once," he says, "but not twice. Can you imagine what would happen [if I went to Ukraine] a second time?" But if he weren't from the one Western European country that has arrested its citizens coming home from the war in Ukraine, would he want to go back to the battlefield? Vasquez doesn't hesitate: "Of course."



An anti-government rebel with a decorated rifle stands at a checkpoint in Slovyansk, Ukraine on May 8, 2014. Credit: Sergey Ponomarev/The New York Times/Redux



Matej Povse

REFUGEES RISK DEATH TRAVELING THROUGH EUROPEAN WINTER

**DESPITE THE DANGERS OF THE EUROPEAN WINTER,
REFUGEES ARE STILL COMING, AND MANY WILL DIE.**

Omid Fatehi Karajo, his wife, Nadereh, and their 10-year-old daughter, Wanya, have made a bold decision. In a few days, they will pile into an inflatable raft and cast off from the Turkish coast in the hope of landing on one of the Greek islands. Sitting together on a sofa in front

of their webcam, the adults don't smile much. Omid is busy explaining his story through a translator, his wife occasionally intervening, while their daughter alternates between sitting on them and sliding in next to them, grinning shyly through her mass of black curls at the webcam. "I am worried [about the journey]," Wanya says. "Especially from Turkey to Greece, because the sea is dangerous." She can swim, but her parents cannot. Omid says he will buy life jackets before his family sets sail.

The Fatehi Karajos used to live in Sanandaj, the capital of Iran's Kurdistan province. More than three years ago, following Omid's arrest and torture for his connections to Kurdish political parties, they fled to Iraqi Kurdistan. But when threats came from Iranian security forces, the family crossed another border, this time to the Turkish city of Eskisehir, where they have lived for 19 months. Despite the approaching winter and the increasing danger of traveling now, they say they can't stay in Turkey anymore, where, as Kurds, they are often targets of racial abuse. Omid says he was assaulted recently by his neighbor. When he reported it to the police, he was told to leave, that they didn't want Kurds in their country. "The most important thing for us is safety," he says. "We know that there is cold weather [in Europe], but it is better than being threatened here."

Despite the plummeting temperatures, the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR, has recorded 218,394 refugees crossing the Mediterranean this past October, which is dramatically higher than the total for the same month in 2014, when there were 23,050 arrivals. In previous years, the refugee crisis was affected by the seasons—summer saw high numbers of arrivals, but those dropped off during winter. In 2015, things are different. One reason is the route has changed. Approximately four times as many refugees are setting sail from Turkey to Greece—a trip that can take as little as 25 minutes in a sturdy boat—as those going from North Africa to Italy. Though winter

storms over the Aegean bring lashing rain and high waves, making traveling in a smuggler's rubber dinghy a daunting prospect, many refugees believe the short distance makes this a comparatively safe option, even as winter approaches.

[[nid:390226]]

This trip, which over 41,000 people made in 2014, has been growing in popularity in 2015. "The route from Turkey to Greece and up through the Balkans is really a 2015 phenomenon," says Adrian Edwards, a UNHCR spokesman. One of the reasons for this is the worsening of conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan—three countries whose citizens make up 93 percent of the arrivals in Greece. These refugees are geographically closer to Turkey; it makes no sense for them to take the North African route. The number of people fleeing these countries seems likely to continue growing over the winter too. Syria has experienced a surge in fighting, caused in part by Russia beginning airstrikes on September 30, while in Afghanistan the Taliban continue to make gains.

Unlike economic migrants, those escaping war cannot choose when to leave. For refugees in countries like Turkey and Lebanon, where many live in miserable conditions with little money, the success others have had making the journey is encouraging them to follow suit rather than endure yet another cold winter where they are. Others are scared that the European Union might be preparing to shut its borders or make a border arrangement with Turkey. Even though it's cold and dangerous, they'd rather cross now than risk being locked out.

To encourage refugees to make the crossing, many people-smugglers, fearing a drop in business, have slashed their prices. Speaking to Newsweek via WhatsApp, a people-smuggler who goes by the name Fida al-Hamwi says he is offering a special winter rate. A boat trip from Turkey to Greece costs between \$1,500 and \$2,000 in the summer. Now it's between \$1,000 and \$1,500, he says. Al-Hamwi's

Facebook page, Smuggled Into Greece, shows a photo of a gleaming white yacht, though photos and videos on the page of people who have crossed safely show a black inflatable raft in the background.

The Fatehi Karajos will pay \$1,200 each to their smuggler to make the crossing. They scraped together the money from friends and family, while Omid took various construction jobs, earning \$10 a day. Assuming the crossing goes safely, they will find little shelter in Greece. Rights groups, including Amnesty International and Save the Children, have criticized the Greek government for a lack of proper reception centers and shelters. “There is an awareness that they need to winterize the tents,” says Patrick Nicholson, director of communications at the Catholic charity Caritas Internationalis, which is headquartered in Rome. “But it hasn’t happened.” On the Greek island of Lesbos, refugees are facing up to 48-hour waits to be processed, sleeping in tents not designed for winter. Others, he says, can be found resting in doorways or under trees. In September, when Nicholson was in the Greek village of Idomeni, on the Macedonian border, he saw refugees sleeping on the train tracks.

Lack of shelter is a problem in Europe and along the Balkans route. “Europe as a whole hasn’t had mechanisms in place for the mass arrival of refugees,” says the UNHCR’s Edwards. “Right now, if you look across Europe the asylum picture is extremely patchy.” Even though sleeping outdoors or in flimsy tents may be feasible in the summer, it cannot continue into winter, which in the Balkans is brutal. Temperatures often drop to well below freezing, while heavy snow can block roads and stall transport. People routinely die of cold; others are stuck in their homes for days. These are the conditions that refugees plan to journey through to Western Europe in a march that many won’t survive. “As we head into winter, it is looking extremely bleak,” says Edwards. “Robust reception capacities simply aren’t in

place.... There's a very real risk of deaths, of more people dying."

At the Opatovac refugee camp in Croatia, close to the border with Serbia, temperatures have already dropped to around 37 degrees Fahrenheit, and it frequently rains. Charlotta Land-Al Hebshi, a child protection adviser for Save the Children who is currently in Croatia, says young children are soaked, freezing and sleeping in the open due to a lack of shelter and basic services. Since Hungary announced the closure of its border with Croatia on October 16, having already shut its border with Serbia, many refugees have had to pass through Slovenia to get to Austria, causing bottlenecks to build up. On October 21, refugees at a camp in Brezice, Slovenia, near the Croatian border, set tents on fire in protest of conditions there. They were tired of the delays, they said, while they lacked food, water and blankets to stave off the cold.

The Fatehi Karajos don't have proper winter clothes, but Omid says they will just follow the other refugees once they get to Greece. When asked where she wants to live, his daughter Wanya beams, turns to the translator and quietly says "Oslo," where her mother's relatives are. It is painful to imagine this skinny 10-year-old girl journeying all the way through Europe in the rain and biting cold. Though aid agencies are on hand in transit camps to distribute raincoats, dry clothes and blankets, they cannot follow the refugees across countries, ensuring that they stay warm. This is the biggest problem facing governments, agencies and charities. "We do winterization programs for camps, for urban settings," says Edwards. "But when it comes to winterizing a crowd—that's something for which there is no ready-made solution."

As they prepare supplies for winter, aid agencies know refugees will die. The grim question for the coming months is only "How many?"



Lucie Parseghian/EPA

AMPHETAMINES FUEL BOTH SIDES OF THE SYRIAN WAR

COMBATANTS IN SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR, CIVILIANS IN THE BATTLE-WEARY REGION AND THE WEALTHY CITIZENS OF THE GULF COUNTRIES ALL HAVE A GROWING APPETITE FOR HARD DRUGS.

Lebanon has long been a playground for wealthy citizens of austere Arab countries, but even the worldly Lebanese were taken aback on October 26 when security officials arrested a 29-year-old Saudi prince, Abdel Mohsen bin

Walid bin Abdel Aziz al-Saud, on suspicion of trying to take 2 tons of amphetamines with him on a private jet bound for the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Lebanese police also arrested four other Saudi men at Beirut International Airport in what the state news agency described as the biggest bust in the airport's history.

The prince's arrest has focused attention on Lebanon's notorious drug-trafficking networks and their ability to cross the Middle East's political and sectarian divides. Combatants in Syria's civil war, civilians in the battle-weary region and the wealthy citizens of the Gulf countries all have a growing appetite for hard drugs. That demand has, in turn, generated fresh revenues for drug barons and militias, who, as they did in previous wars in Colombia, Afghanistan and elsewhere, have become allies of convenience in many cases.

Analysts say that the war next door has tied up many of Lebanon's security officials who might otherwise be fighting drug traffickers; many are busy monitoring the volatile border areas and the pockets of jihadis straddling it who are sympathetic to extremist Sunni groups involved in the Syrian war. The police's and army's lack of focus on the drug-producing regions has inadvertently helped fuel the rise of the amphetamine trade. Lebanese hashish producers say that the limited law enforcement presence in the country's Bekaa Valley in particular over the past two years has contributed to a barely interrupted supply of marijuana, driving street prices down and cutting into profit margins. That decline in profits, and the growing appeal of amphetamines in the Middle East, has created an incentive for some hashish dealers here to produce more amphetamines. In recent years, makeshift labs have sprung up in Lebanese villages and just over the Syrian border. These labs churn out a knock-off version of Captagon, a brand name for the widely banned synthetic amphetamine phenethylamine. That's what the police say they found on the Saudi prince's plane.

Drug dealers in the Bekaa Valley say they are used to dealing with customers from the Gulf states. “Saudis and other Gulfies are the biggest buyers of Captagon, absolutely,” says Abu Hussein, a Lebanese drug trafficker from a village several miles from the Syrian border. “They believe it gives them special powers for sex,” he adds, smiling mischievously.

The drug is not only popular for those rumored benefits; fighters from all sides of the Syrian war use the pill’s speedy effects to stay alert for long stretches on the battlefield. Competing propaganda outlets frequently claim Captagon pills have been discovered on dead and captured enemy fighters. For Hezbollah and Syrian government forces, alleging that their enemies are taking drugs plays into claims that they are fighting against nonbeliever “terrorists.”

The war in Syria has created supply as well as demand. Supplies of Captagon in the region rose after Syrian rebels lost the city of Qusayr to Hezbollah fighters backed by the Syrian army in 2013. Qusayr has been transformed into a Captagon production and distribution hub and a hideout for notorious Lebanese Shiite traffickers, some of whom are subject to arrest warrants on charges of murder, kidnapping and currency counterfeiting, says Abu Hussein. The city, which was once home to roughly 60,000 mostly Sunni residents, lies on a strategic route linking Damascus to the Syrian regime’s Mediterranean coastal stronghold. Today, according to Abu Hussein and people who have traveled recently to Qusayr, the city is mostly a transit point and garrison for Hezbollah and allied Syrian militiamen.

At times, the lines between drug baron and warlord become blurred. Lebanon’s most flamboyant drug lord, Noah Zaiter, was filmed in September with Hezbollah fighters besieging the rebel-held Syrian mountain town of Zabadani. Wearing his trademark cowboy hat, Zaiter pledged to destroy the Sunni militant group the Islamic State, also

known as ISIS, in the name of Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah.

Deep family ties on both sides of the border—and in both drug-smuggling organizations and militias—ensure that the flow of drugs, weapons and militiamen is largely uninterrupted. Most of the drugs go through the Bekaa Valley, a narrow, fertile basin that runs parallel to Lebanon's eastern border with Syria and is arguably the Middle East's primary hub for counterfeit amphetamine pills. Bracketed by two mountain ranges, the picturesque plain has long been known for the production and trafficking of narcotics—mostly locally grown hashish and cocaine smuggled from Latin America and West Africa.

"The Bekaa is basically a tribal land, ruled by clans that are heavily armed and often involved in the drug trade," says Timur Goksel, a former U.N. peacekeeping official in Lebanon, now an editor for the news site Al-Monitor. "The police are practically nonexistent there," he adds. "The whole structure of the Lebanese state allows this to happen."

The Lebanese army and police promised a crackdown on criminal activity in the Bekaa Valley in February, but after nine months Lebanese politicians have deemed it a flop. One Hezbollah member of the Lebanese parliament last month called the plan "a total failure," and Lebanon's Interior Minister Mohammad Machnouk, who belongs to a political bloc opposed to Hezbollah, agreed, telling reporters in October the crackdown was nothing more than "empty promises." A police spokesman said the country's security forces are preparing a new plan.

The Bekaa is the backyard, training camp and birthplace of Hezbollah, which was formed over three decades ago by Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps. The only building in a vast field of chest-high hashish plants near the Bekaa village of Taraya is a small green and white mosque. The square structure, which stands alone at a small crossroads, flies

the yellow and green flag of Hezbollah and black banners bearing religious rallying cries.

Hezbollah and the prominent Shiite drug trading clans here are mostly bound by mutual self-interest. Both offer some protection for the other: The clans have recently helped to secure Hezbollah supply lines to its forces fighting in Syria, while the group allegedly provides political cover to top clan members during occasional law enforcement crackdowns near their turf.

Several of the area's most prominent traffickers downplayed the role that the Captagon trade plays in fueling the war in Syria. When asked, most cited the drug's rock-bottom wholesale price, the high cost of black-market military hardware and a massive influx of foreign money as reasons for why the profits from even large sales of the low-cost narcotic would not greatly influence the war's course.

Abu Hussein and his family have made their fortune by growing and selling hashish in this part of the country for decades, as well as moving shipments of cocaine. Captagon is so cheap and easy to produce, he says, that the Gulf's insatiable appetite for the drug made getting in on the action several years ago an obvious business decision. Chinese-made pill presses sell for anywhere from \$700 to \$2,000 here, and the chemicals used in production are similarly inexpensive and easy to acquire, mostly by way of smuggling routes from Turkey.

Captagon is one of the cheapest narcotics available in the Middle East. The small, eastern town of Baalbek, famed for its Roman ruins and decades of virtual lawlessness, has numerous small labs. There, one pill goes for \$1 to \$2 on the street. In Beirut, the average going rate is \$10 apiece. Some Lebanese cocaine dealers admit that they sometimes cut their product with Captagon because it's so inexpensive and readily accessible. The United Nations's Office on Drugs and Crime reports that Saudi Arabia's drug of choice is amphetamines—usually some form of Captagon.

According to UNODC figures, nearly 40 percent of the world's amphetamine seizures were made in the Middle East in 2009. Over half of those occurred in Saudi Arabia, where drug charges are often punishable by death.

"It's a garbage drug, but it's inexpensive," says Marwan, a 31-year-old IT specialist from the Bekaa who says he uses Captagon several times per week. "We can only afford cocaine for special occasions."

Despite the attention that the Saudi prince's arrest has brought to drug smuggling in the region, Abu Hussein says he's not concerned about a crackdown on producers and dealers. "The army will issue threats, and the police will stay away, as always," he says. "Once a year they arrest a few of our cousins, and there are no charges. There is no Lebanese state."



Jungyeon Roh

TWO NUMBERS: BACON IS CARCINOGENIC, BUT SO IS THE AIR YOU BREATHE

AND DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY HAVE READ, NEITHER IS NEARLY AS BAD FOR YOU AS SMOKING CIGARETTES.

When the World Health Organization officially designated processed meats like bacon and sausage a definite (Group 1) carcinogen in October, the meat lobby hit back immediately. The International Agency for Research on

Cancer (IARC), an arm of the WHO, has evaluated many hundreds of agents for cancer risk, yet found “only one substance, a chemical in yoga pants,” to probably not cause cancer, Betsy Booren, of the North American Meat Institute, said in a **statement**, implying that the agency was a bit trigger-happy with their cancer designations.

This premise fits nicely with what was said over and over in living rooms and online comment sections after the bacon news broke: “Everything gives you cancer.” Ironically, that’s a welcome palliative; inevitability is liberating. Keep eating your bacon, drinking your wine, smoking your cigarette and sunbathing (all Group 1 carcinogens). After all, the very air we breathe might be giving us cancer (outdoor air pollution: Group 1 carcinogen), so why worry? Being a painter, hairdresser or a barber, and working shifts that disrupt normal sleeping patterns, are cancer threats too, per the IARC’s ranking.

Related: What’s So Bad About Bacon?

In fact, the IARC has evaluated 985 agents and found only one to definitely not have the potential to give you cancer (the “yoga pants” chemical; an agent used in synthetic fibers like nylon). Of these, it has designated 504 agents as “not classifiable,” due to inadequate evidence. The other 481 have been categorized into three groups: “possibly carcinogenic to humans,” “probably carcinogenic to humans,” and definitely “carcinogenic to humans,” which is where our dear bacon and sausage has fallen. Red meat, meanwhile, was placed in the “probably carcinogenic” category.

So why not just shrug it all off and try to enjoy life before the inevitable diagnosis?



Despite what you may have read, neither bacon nor air is nearly as bad for you as smoking cigarettes. Credit: Stefan Wermuth/Reuters

That'd be a good plan, except that it misses a few important facts. To start, the IARC won't even evaluate something for cancer risk until an **international group of scientists and experts**, who are vetted for conflicts of interest and meet once every five years for the purpose, study the literature and recommend they prioritize that thing for review. That means there's likely already some compelling evidence that the agent might pose a risk.

And while it may be tempting to scoff at a system that puts tobacco and asbestos in the same category as bacon, the IARC isn't suggesting equivalence. That top-level category is simply reserved for agents where the cancer risk has become clear-cut. Tobacco and asbestos are still far more dangerous, in terms of cancer risk, than the occasional sausage patty. Smoking a pack a day over a lifetime raises one's risk of lung cancer 50-fold, while "worst-case scenarios in relation to processed meat or red meat rarely reach more than twofold," Bernard Stewart, an oncology researcher at the University of New South Wales a

nd chair of the IARC's working group on meat, **explained**. (The group found that each additional 50 grams—roughly two strips of bacon per day—raised one's risk of bowel cancer by 18 percent, but that means the overall risk is only multiplied by 1.18 percent.)

Still, we'll be sure to hear groans when the IARC makes its next set of announcements: After designating it "possibly carcinogenic" in 1991, coffee is back **on the list** for next year's evaluation.



Ding Yuan/Xinhua/eyevine/Redux

THE KREMLIN KNOWS WHAT YOU LIKE...ON FACEBOOK

**PUTIN'S INTERNET CRACKDOWN IS PUTTING RUSSIANS
IN JAIL AND COULD SINK THE ECONOMY.**

When Yekaterina Vologzheninova, a shop assistant from central Russia, shared around half a dozen links about the war in eastern Ukraine with her online friends, she was expecting nothing more than a few heated arguments, at the most.

But her 52 virtual friends on VKontakte, the Facebook of the Russian-speaking world, weren't the only ones following her posts, which included links to Ukrainian-produced documentaries and TV shows sharply critical of the Kremlin. Officers from the Investigative Committee, an FBI-style law enforcement agency answerable only to President Vladimir Putin, were also tracking her online.

In December 2014, Investigative Committee officers, accompanied by agents from the Federal Security Service (FSB), the successor agency to the KGB, raided Vologzheninova's modest apartment in Yekaterinburg, some 900 miles east of Moscow. They seized her computer and digital camera, as well as her 12-year-old daughter's new tablet. They also informed a shocked Vologzheninova that she was being charged with "inciting hatred" of Russian "volunteers" fighting in Ukraine, as well as of Russian authorities.

Vologzheninova, who says she has never been abroad and has around \$1,000 in savings, was also placed on a federal list of "terrorists and extremists" that includes groups such as the Islamic State (also known as ISIS) and Al-Qaeda, and her bank account and credit cards have been frozen. Asked about the case, a spokeswoman for the regional prosecutor said posting links to "extremist" material was a criminal offense. Her trial started in mid-October, behind closed doors, and Vologzheninova faces up to four years in jail if found guilty.

"I was simply looking for some alternative views to Russian state-run media's one-sided coverage of the conflict in Ukraine. Nothing that I linked to had previously been classified as extremist by the Russian authorities," Vologzheninova tells Newsweek. "And my online page was set to private, which means only my friends could see the links."

Opposition bloggers say the heavy-handed persecution of Vologzheninova is part of an ongoing bid to silence Russia's

vibrant online community. “Cases like Vologzheninova’s are intended to frighten others,” says Andrei Malgin, one of Russia’s most influential opposition bloggers. “It’s entirely random, like a lottery. Any one of us could pull the short straw at any moment.”

When Putin came to power in 1999, around 1 million Russians were online. Within just over a decade, that figure grew more than fiftyfold. Putin is not an Internet user, and until very recently he was dismissive of the medium, calling it “50 percent porn.” Although he clamped down hard on media freedoms from the very first days of his rule, Putin and his Kremlin advisers paid little attention to online dissent. With total control over national TV, still the main source of news for most Russians, there seemed to be little need.

As high-speed Internet became widespread, opposition activists utilized social networks and online tools such as Twitter and YouTube to highlight Russia’s ingrained culture of corruption, as well as to attract attention to a range of causes, most notably a campaign to defend ancient woodland near Moscow from a Kremlin-backed highway project. These Internet activists were mockingly dubbed “hamsters from social networks” by government officials, but the growing power of Russia’s digital dissidents became evident in the December 2011 parliamentary elections, when online videos of blatant vote-rigging in favor of Putin’s United Russia party brought tens of thousands of protesters onto the streets of Moscow. “I am an Internet hamster, and I will gnaw through the throats of those swine!” screamed Alexei Navalny, the popular anti-corruption blogger, as online anger transformed into offline fury.

Stung by what Putin said was a U.S.-backed plot to topple him, the Kremlin struck back against its Internet-savvy foes. “Putin saw that the Internet was capable of mobilizing massive amounts of discontented people in a short time,” says Malgin, the opposition blogger. “He

realized that it wasn't enough just to seize control of all media outlets—he had to control the Internet as well.”

Since the protests of 2011-2012, Putin has approved a swath of laws that have made online dissent more dangerous. Criminal charges against “extremist” bloggers and Internet users have become commonplace. Opposition websites, including that of chess champion and Kremlin critic Garry Kasparov, have been blocked. Thousands of government-financed Internet “trolls” are employed to produce online praise of Putin and pen hate-filled posts against his enemies. Pavel Durov, the young, rebellious founder of VKontakte, the popular social media site that played a major role in the post-election protests, has been forced out of the country and his company turned over to Kremlin loyalists. In late October, the U.S.-based democracy watchdog Freedom House downgraded its rating on Russia's Internet to “Not Free” in 2015 from “Partly Free” in 2014.

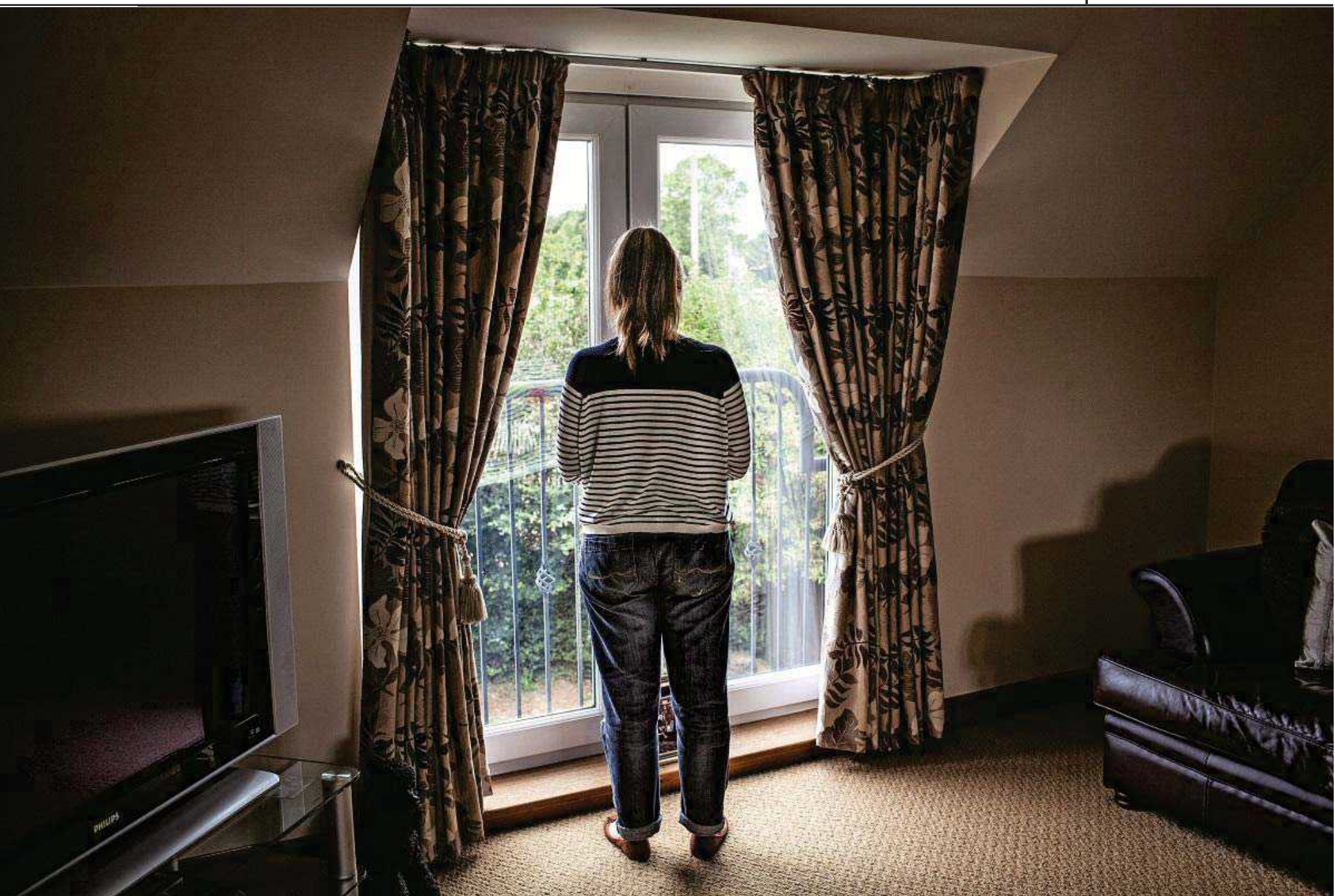
And the laws keep coming. Under vaguely worded proposed legislation that could be approved by the Kremlin this month, the FSB will gain the power to summon for “precautionary discussions” those whose behavior—online or offline—suggests they may be likely to commit an “extremist” act. For Vologzheninova, a middle-aged woman facing jail over her online posts, laws such as this are an absurdity. “Russian state television is itself extremist,” she says. “Its broadcasts have provoked a wave of hatred against Ukrainians.”

The Kremlin has also moved against foreign-owned social networking sites. A law due to come into force on January 1, 2016, will force tech companies to store the data they hold on Russian users within the country. Those that fail to comply could be blocked. Although discussions are still ongoing, reports suggest that Facebook, which has around 13 million users in Russia, will refuse to agree with the Kremlin's demand.

Putin also appears to be looking for an Internet “off switch” in the event of mass protests triggered by Russia’s growing economic woes. In October, an industry insider claimed that Russia’s Internet regulator, Roskomnadzor, had experimented with ways of isolating the country from the World Wide Web. Roskomnadzor denied the report. Later that month, Russia’s communications minister, Nikolai Nikiforov, flew to Tehran to visit his Iranian counterpart. The official reason for Nikiforov's trip was to discuss the opening of an office by Yandex, the Internet company that runs Russia's biggest online search engine. But Yandex subsequently announced it had no plans to develop its business in Iran, fueling speculation that the real reason for Nikiforov's trip was to find out more about Iranian Internet censorship.

“Putin dreams of a sovereign Internet,” said Malgin, the anti-Putin blogger. “But just as soon as Russia is disconnected from the global Internet, everything—industry, science, transport—will cease to function. By halting the spread of undesirable opinions, he will kill off Russia’s economy for good.”

One thing that won’t be stopped, according to Oleg Kozyrev, another well-known opposition blogger, is opposition to Putin. “Russians stopped the [KGB-backed] coup in 1991 without the Internet,” he says. “You can't prevent people from communicating.”



Tom Jamieson/The New York Times/Redux

THE LOST U.K. CHILD ABUSE TESTIMONIES

**ONLINE TESTIMONIES SURVIVORS GAVE TO A BRITISH
INQUIRY INTO CHILD ABUSE WERE MYSTERIOUSLY
DELETED.**

Investigators probing thousands of allegations of child sexual abuse in the United Kingdom set up a website this past summer to gather evidence. They invited survivors to share their stories with the independent inquiry through what was promised to be a secure and confidential portal.

Many survivors did so. But somehow nearly three weeks of submissions were mysteriously deleted, “instantly and permanently,” in what **a notice** on the site in October said was due to “a change in our website address.”

That message caused survivors, support groups and members of the British Parliament to question whether the survivors’ data was being handled with the utmost care, with attention to privacy and security—not to mention why there wasn’t some kind of data backup. The inquiry’s request for people to resubmit their stories was met with skepticism.

“It is a known fact that it takes survivors of child abuse 20, 30, 40 years to recover or to report it,” says abuse survivor Andrew Kershaw. “They have to trust, and unfortunately many of them will never trust, never tell anyone what happened to them, and take it to their grave. So their information being lost has done irreparable damage, has taken away their trust once more. Many won’t come forward again.”

In July, when New Zealand Judge Lowell Goddard launched what she called “the largest and most ambitious public inquiry ever established” into decades of sexual abuse allegations throughout England and Wales, she issued a **stern warning** to the U.K. government: no shredding or “premature destruction of files or records that later become required as evidence.”

This **loss of key documents** has been a hallmark of the U.K.’s recent focus on apprehending accused child abusers in high-ranking positions of government and public life. The push came after authorities said BBC celebrity Jimmy Savile, who died in 2011, had abused up to **1,000 children** over four decades. More recently, the Home Office came under fire after it “**lost or destroyed**” more than 100 files tied to claims of child sex abuse by, among others, prominent members of the U.K. government, according to the findings of a separate inquiry in 2014. Newsweek has also learned that many Home Office papers are **missing**

from the U.K.'s National Archives that should have been declassified more than a decade ago.

And then, on October 15, the inquiry's website quietly **posted the notice** stating that all survivor submissions made from September 14 to October 2 had been deleted. Officials at the inquiry indicated they had no way of knowing how many submissions were lost, as the team never received them. "We have confirmed that the information cannot be recovered," inquiry spokeswoman Natalie Davison says . "The data are intentionally not saved at the website when the form is submitted, in line with good security practice."

Sarah Champion, a member of Parliament for Rotherham, a town that authorities recently found was plagued for years by organized child sexual abuse, sent a letter to Goddard asking why there was no backup system in place. "Furthermore, it is of some concern that such a significant failure of IT systems went unnoticed for almost three weeks," she wrote in the letter. Champion is the U.K.'s shadow minister for preventing abuse and domestic violence.

Goddard to date has made no public comment, but a statement posted to the inquiry's website in late October explained that new measures are now in place to ensure testimony will be sent to a "secure inquiry mailbox," with limits on who can see it, and submissions will be checked daily. "We believe we now have all the necessary measures in place to ensure this will not happen again," it said.

Goddard, in her opening remarks to the inquiry this past summer, assured survivors that she would go to great lengths to win their confidence, offering private sessions to report abuse, with counselors, translators and assistance for the disabled. "The experiences of victims and survivors will be the core currency of the inquiry," she **said** , adding that the "sheer scale" of the problem was overwhelming and citing an estimate that 1 in 20 children in the U.K. was likely to have been abused.

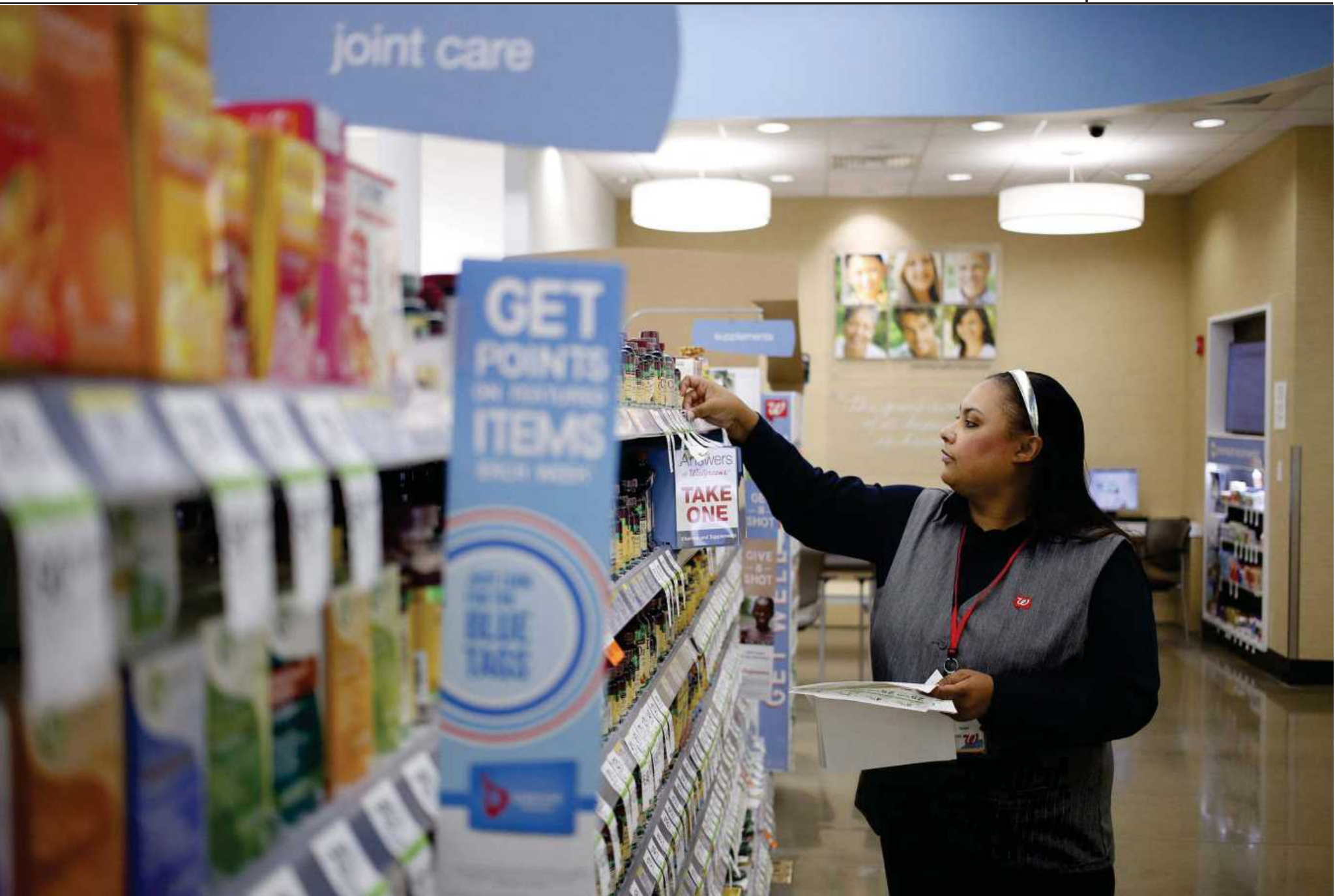
Phil Frampton, an abuse survivor and national coordinator of White Flowers, an umbrella organization for survivors' groups, says the task may be enormous, but survivors must be treated with more compassion. "The Goddard inquiry needs to rapidly get its act together if it is to maintain any trust amongst survivors," he says.

After inspecting the inquiry's website for Newsweek, Phil Mair, an independent IT specialist who has worked on secure websites for the U.K. government and the Metropolitan Police Service, says he remains deeply concerned about its security. Because the inquiry's site was built using Drupal, a free software commonly used for personal websites, he says the information that the site gathers is vulnerable to being intercepted and even redirected.

"I would call this site highly amateurish," he says. "It's staggering, to be honest. Considering the extreme sensitivity of the information it is handling, the casual and unprofessional way with which this site was put together really does beggar belief."

A professionally designed and secure site, he says, would have cost the inquiry from 3,000 to 6,000 pounds (\$4,600 to \$9,200). The inquiry's budget for the 2015-2016 fiscal year is 17.9 million pounds (\$28 million).

According to officials at the inquiry, John O'Brien, a senior civil servant with the Home Office and head secretariat for the inquiry, is leading its in-house technology team. Despite emails, calls and a visit to his offices, O'Brien did not respond to requests for comment from Newsweek.



Luke Sharrett/Bloomberg/Getty

WALGREENS VS. THE AMERICAN DREAM

THE WHITE HOUSE SAYS A NEW FEDERAL OVERTIME POLICY CAN HELP RESTORE THE MIDDLE CLASS. BUSINESS GROUPS HAVE OTHER IDEAS.

It was the kind of hot Florida day when even air conditioning didn't help, and Ruby Warner had been on her feet for hours. The executive assistant manager at a Walgreen store near West Palm Beach, Warner had unloaded two deliveries, cleaned the bathroom and covered the photo department because the employee assigned to that job hadn't

shown up. Now it was almost 5 p.m., and her shift was ending, leaving Warner barely enough time to race across town and pick up her teenage daughter from marching band practice. But a line was building at the pharmacy, and the store manager wanted her to help.

“Miss Warner to pharmacy,” the manager said. “Miss Warner to ring on pharmacy, please.” Warner headed back to the register and began checking out customers. Later, she called her mother to pick up her daughter; it would be another two hours before she was able to go home.

Months earlier, when Warner was promoted to executive assistant manager, she was excited. For the single mother of four, “it felt like God had answered my prayers,” she told *Newsweek* in May. This was the promotion she had been working toward for seven years as an hourly wage “management trainee,” an upgrade to a salaried position in which she would be groomed to become a manager. But Warner quickly found herself clocking 50- and 60-hour weeks instead of the 44 she’d been scheduled for. Even though her annual salary was now about \$10,000 more than she’d made as a management trainee, when she did the math, she realized her wage per hour was exactly the same, or sometimes less. Still, she tried to stay positive; this was all part of paying her dues. “It was my dream to have my own store,” she says. “I thought it would take two, maybe three, years, tops.” Six years later, Warner was still waiting.

The Department of Labor estimates that around 6 million Americans hold jobs like Warner’s: Their employers classify them as overtime exempt even though their positions should qualify them for after-hours pay, and they may end up earning less than hourly employees working under them. Since lawmakers passed the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in 1938, the government has required employers to pay time-and-a-half for almost every worker who clocks more than 40 hours per week. But salaried employees whose roles are considered “executive, administrative or

professional” and who are paid above a set baseline are exempt. Employers don’t have to pay them extra if they work more than 40 hours.

That baseline was set in 1975 at \$23,660 (an amount roughly equivalent to \$104,642 in 2015 dollars, according to the Department of Labor) , which covered 62 percent of salaried workers at the time. Today, less than 8 percent qualify because that baseline income hasn’t increased—even though it’s now below the federal poverty line for a family of four. “Clearly, if you’re earning that little and working more than 40 hours, it violates the basic premise of the FLSA,” says David Weil, an administrator at the Department of Labor.

During the Republican debate on October 28, 10 presidential candidates competed with one another to show how much they cared about the plight of single mothers and other “struggling Americans.” Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush noted that 6 million people dropped below the poverty line during President Barack Obama’s time in office. Bush then cited the need to cut taxes and overhaul Social Security so “the middle class can get rising income again.” But the Obama administration has spent the past year working on an update to overtime regulations that advocates say could do more to increase incomes and restore the middle class than anything else on the table. The proposed rule, published in July 2015, will raise the threshold to \$50,440 per year, which would extend overtime pay to roughly 40 percent of the American workforce.

As Weil’s team now figures out how to implement the final rule, industry critics are pushing back. On October 8, the National Restaurant Association and other industry representatives spoke at a hearing before the congressional Small Business Committee, arguing that the new threshold represents an “executive salary” in the rural South and other parts of the country, and that small businesses won’t be able

to afford the increase. More hearings and a court challenge are expected within the next year.

At the center of the debate: how to determine who qualifies for overtime. Under the current rules, the Department of Labor estimates that 11.6 million salaried white-collar workers are eligible because their primary duties cannot be classified as “executive, administrative, professional or outside sales.” But parsing out what those categories mean is murky. “There’s been a very significant increase in litigation around this issue,” says Weil.

Warner is one of those who sued. In a 2015 case against the Walgreen Co., which was settled out of court, her lawyers argued that the store didn’t promote Warner and others to give them a chance to move up. Instead, they shifted them to salaried positions in order to save money. “Walgreens made a conscious decision to eliminate overtime for hourly employees in 2007,” Mark Cullen, the lawyer who represented Warner and 15 other Walgreen employees, told Newsweek in a May interview. “But the stores still required the same amount of labor.”



The Department of Labor estimates around 6 million Americans are classified as overtime exempt even though their positions should qualify them for after-hours pay. Credit: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty

Cullen's claim was confirmed by court documents, but Philip Caruso, a representative for Walgreen, denied that a “no overtime” policy exists, emphasizing, “We do pay overtime for hourly employees.”

Labor experts say Walgreen is not the only retail chain to employ such a tactic. “Promoting hourly workers to low-paying salaried positions is a common practice among restaurant and retail chains,” says Chris Tilly, director of the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs. “It totally makes sense from a corporate point of view because of how much they can save on overtime costs.”

In response to suits filed against national chains such as Family Dollar, Price Chopper and U.S. Bank, employers have argued that workers should be exempt if they’re given keys to the store, responsibility for shift schedules or conduct interviews with job candidates—but haven’t been able to agree on what percentage of their time needs

to be devoted to those tasks in order to qualify. “I learned how to run shifts and then a little bit about how to manage budgets,” says Bernie Anthony, a former Chipotle employee who started out as an hourly worker before being promoted to a salaried “apprentice” position. Exempt from overtime, she sometimes made less per hour than she had before her promotion. “But most of the time, I was still on the line, making burrito bowls or working the cash register. I wanted to go higher and do more, but that wasn’t the job. I felt disappointed a lot of the time that I worked there.”

Chipotle could not be reached for comment before press time.

Labor advocates have pushed for clearer parameters for overtime exemption, such as a rule used by California, which requires employees to spend at least 50 percent of their time on managerial tasks. But industry lobbyists have resisted such changes. “If there’s one thing we heard from every single business outreach session, it was ‘We’re not crazy about the duties test, but whatever you do, don’t touch it,’” says Weil. “They felt the devil you know is better. We said, ‘OK, we won’t change it.’” Instead, the Department of Labor says it raised the proposed salary threshold.

Employers say that there is a stigma associated with being an hourly, overtime-eligible employee and that workers who stand to be reclassified under the proposed rule will view that as a demotion rather than a step toward achieving the American dream. “Forty-five percent of the managers we surveyed said they were worried [the new overtime rule] would make them feel like they were performing a job instead of pursuing a career,” says Lizzy Simmons, senior director of government relations for the National Retail Federation, an industry group whose board of directors includes executives from the Container Store, Petco, B.J.’s Wholesale Club and other national chains. “Converting those workers back to hourly status could

eliminate the middle-management rung from the retail career ladder.”

With the industry fighting against the proposed rule, some worry that employers will find ways to exploit loopholes: “I’m confident that raising the pay threshold will result in overtime pay for a larger number of workers, but employers can still do end runs around it,” says UCLA’s Tilly. “They may replace full-time positions with multiple part-time jobs [that lets them save on benefits], or set the base hours for full-timers as low as 30 hours per week, so they can still have them work those 10 extra hours without triggering the need for overtime pay. Both of these are common practices in retail and other industries.”

Simmons declined to comment on ways employers could circumvent the proposed rule. But she argues that the status quo is beneficial to middle management because hourly workers tend to have fewer benefits and less “flexibility” than salaried employees. Marc Freedman, executive director of labor law policy for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, voiced a similar concern in the organization’s public comments on the rule, which referenced an “exempt employee’s” ability to take time off to manage family emergencies or for children’s baseball games.

Warner says she had to miss plenty of baseball games during her time as an overtime-exempt employee. Week to week, she never knew which Walgreen store she’d be assigned to, and her commute ranged from five minutes to more than an hour.

Warner also found that working more hours didn’t lead to much advancement. The training her bosses promised, she says, rarely amounted to more than a weekly conference call, which her manager often asked her to skip to so she could stock shelves. She estimates that 90 percent of her time at work was spent unloading vendor trucks, unpacking inventory and stocking shelves, just as she had done as an hourly employee. “I don’t mind working hard,” she says.

“But I didn’t understand how I could be called a manager and yet I was the one cleaning the bathrooms.”

Today, Warner works at a casino. It’s an hourly job, and the wage isn’t much better than she earned at Walgreen. But she’s happy that she can go home on time and have her weekends free. “I’m singing solos at church now,” she says. “I’ve got a couple of grandkids, and I can be more in their lives. At times, I do want to get back into management, but right now, I’m taking more time for me.”

This article was reported in partnership with the Investigative Fund at the Nation Institute.



Kim Kyung-Hoon/Reuters

EVEN WITH ONE-CHILD POLICY LIFTED, CHINA BECOMING 'WORLD'S LARGEST OLD-AGE HOME'

**EVEN THOUGH BEIJING NOW ALLOWS CITIZENS A
SECOND CHILD, CHINA'S DEMOGRAPHICS WILL BE A
HUGE PROBLEM FOR YEARS TO COME.**

As a symbol of the coercive state—an authoritarian government dictating the most intimate decisions a person can make—not much could surpass the People’s Republic of China’s one-child policy. The government commenced the policy in 1979 in order to arrest soaring population growth in what was then a very poor country. The Chinese government says 400 million births were prevented. When the one-child policy began, China aimed to limit its population in the year 2000 to 1.2 billion. The population in 2000 was 1.26 billion.

But for all the ostensible success of the policy—some demographers claim China’s population growth would have flattened out even without it—the draconian rule left emotional, social and economic scars the country and its citizens will be dealing with for years. Its consequences are felt throughout China, particularly in poorer rural areas, where its enforcement was often particularly brutal.

Last year, in a case that received widespread attention on social media, a farmer from Guizhou province in southwest China, Wang Guang Rong, committed suicide after local authorities would not allow his children to attend public schools without paying the fines levied on families that had violated the policy. Wang and his wife had four children—not commonplace in China—as they tried and finally succeeded to have a boy after their three daughters were born. (In a Confucian, patriarchal society like China’s, the desire for male offspring is close to being hardwired.) Wang, 37, was ordered to pay 22,500 renminbi—the equivalent of \$3,500—money he didn’t have. On March 3, 2014, he slit his wrists, leaving his four children fatherless.

Related: [China's One-Child Policy and American Adoptees](#)

In many rural towns, officials frequently forced mothers to have abortions rather than carry a second child to term. Forced sterilizations were also common. The zealous enforcement of the one-child policy frequently brought Beijing attention it didn’t want. In 2005, a blind, self-

educated lawyer, Chen Guangcheng, organized a class-action suit on behalf of peasant women in Shandong province who had been forced to have abortions.

The government reacted furiously. It arrested Chen and convicted him of “damaging property and organizing a mob.” He spent four years in jail, then spent two years under house arrest. In 2012 he escaped and fled to the U.S. embassy. Beijing reluctantly allowed Chen to emigrate to the U.S.

The social consequences of the policy were profound. Because China is a patriarchal society, infanticide—the disposal of newborn baby girls—became an epidemic. One result is the **imbalance between young men and women**. In 2009, there were more than 119 boys born for every 100 girls. By 2020, according to the China Academy of Social Sciences, a leading government-affiliated think tank, more than 24 million men will find themselves unable to find a spouse because of the gender imbalance.

The even greater demographic distortion directly attributable to the one-child policy—which the government cited in its announcement—is the rapid aging of Chinese society. About 10 percent of the population is older than 65, and that number is about to increase sharply—15 percent by 2027 and 20 percent by 2035. Fan Bao, the chief executive of China Renaissance, a Shanghai-based investment bank, says China’s future is that of the “world’s largest old-age home.”



A street vendor awaits customers beneath a billboard exhorting people to adhere to China's one-child policy, in Lanzhou, China on August 4, 1988. China recently lifted the policy, allowing families to have a second child.

Credit: Mark Avery/AP

The burdens of caring for the residents of that home will fall significantly on the one-child generation: Married couples born in the 1980s will have to care for four parents, themselves and their own children. That's part of the reason the recent change in policy is unlikely to have a dramatic effect on China's population anytime soon, never mind what the government's goals are. On WeChat, China's pre-eminent social media platform, commentary and jokes about the policy change abounded in the immediate aftermath of the October 29 announcement. "As a member of the 'screwed generation,' I hereby announce my intention not to have another child," said one Li Feng Wei, a Shanghai resident.

The other force working against a rapid demographic shift is the cost of living in urban China. On top of the all the familial responsibilities, new entrants into the workforce complain bitterly about the price of housing in China's largest cities—despite what has been a pronounced cooling off of what had been a real estate boom over the past decade. In an unscientific snap online poll on Sina News, a popular news portal, 43 percent of more than 160,000 respondents said they would not be taking advantage of the opportunity to have a second child, while 29 percent said they would. The remainder said they'd wait and see.

Chen Li, a 28-year-old mechanical engineer in the eastern city of Hangzhou, was among those unmoved by the policy change. "I can't even afford to buy an apartment and have one child," he said. "Having two is a fantasy."

China had already eased its one-child policy a bit in recent years. Couples who were both only children have been able to have two children for several years now. The evidence thus far suggests that the reluctance to have more than one is real, not merely anecdotal. According to a study by Stuart Basten, a demographer at Oxford University, the fertility rate for couples who were both only children was 0.64 in 2003, and that rose to just 0.89 by 2007. The family

planning commission polled 38,000 couples in 2008 and found that just 19 percent of them wanted to have more than one child.

The new policy does not rid China of the family planning bureaucracy that has presided over the controversial population policy. Beijing has simply replaced the one-child policy with a two-child policy. “The fundamentals of family planning as a restrictive and coercive policy have not changed,” says Maya Wang, a researcher at Human Rights Watch Asia.

That said, there will be millions of Chinese citizens delighted to have a second child. The country’s economic ascent over the last three decades has created a large class of solidly middle and upper middle class citizens who can afford a second child. So give the government credit for that. But China’s grim demographics are among its most daunting problems, and this change—as overdue as it might have been—will not come close to fixing them anytime soon.



Marcus Bleasdale

UGANDAN CHILDREN OF WOMEN RAPED BY LRA FIGHTERS FACE THREATS

**AS UGANDA MOVES ON FROM DECADES OF WAR,
WOMEN RAPED BY BLOODTHIRSTY GUERRILLAS FACE
A NEW CRISIS: PROTECTING THEIR CHILDREN FROM
REVENGE ATTACKS.**

Jessica Agutu spits through the gap between her two front teeth, then brings her son to her breast. “This baby has brought me problems,” she says.

Agutu, in her early 30s, is one of many Ugandan women who bore children fathered by soldiers in the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a guerrilla group that many compared to a cult, not without good reason. Led by mass murderer and self-styled religious prophet Joseph Kony, the group abducted and raped thousands of women from its formation in 1987 through the late 2000s.

While the violence is largely over, women like Agutu are pariahs. “I have been rejected by my own family and community after successfully escaping from captivity,” she says as she rests her tiny frame against the only tree stump at her new homestead at a rehabilitation center on the outskirts of the city of Gulu, in northern Uganda. “They told me my child was born in sin and I must kill him.”

Dominic Ongwen, a top LRA commander indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), kidnapped Agutu when she was 12. She says he is the father of her oldest son, aged 14, who lives at the rehabilitation center, where around 1,000 women and children live isolated from the community and guarded by security forces. She gave birth to four more children from other LRA fighters, the youngest aged 4.

[[nid:389899]]

The **United Nations has said** the LRA is responsible for more than 100,000 deaths and abducted between 60,000 and 100,000 children, forcing many of the boys to become soldiers and the girls to be sex slaves for fighters. Kony, 54, remains at large, and the **LRA is estimated to have fewer than 200** combatants, largely operating in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, according to the Washington, D.C.-based **Resolve LRA Crisis Initiative**. The United States has sent

military advisers to help Ugandan forces find Kony and posted a \$5 million bounty for him.

In 2006, the government and the LRA signed a cessation of hostilities agreement, and Uganda has since made progress in rehabilitating former child soldiers and resettling many of the 2.5 million people displaced by the conflict. By now, most LRA top commanders have either died or are facing charges in the Ugandan and ICC courts.

Even as Uganda emerges from its decades-long horror, some of those who endured the worst atrocities at the hands of the warlords find themselves grappling with the long-lasting consequences: Children fathered by LRA fighters are now the targets of reprisals. “My friend’s son was murdered early this year after locals suspected that his father was Joseph Kony,” says Agutu. “I’m also hiding my son because if people discover that his father is Ongwen, then they’ll kill him. They say that they need to revenge atrocities they experienced under LRA.” At the ICC court in The Hague, in the Netherlands, Ongwen is facing 67 charges that include recruiting child soldiers and keeping sex slaves.

While LRA leaders are being brought to justice, Agutu says authorities should do more to help their victims. “Our children are mistreated daily in schools and by communities because of their parents. We need this behavior to stop,” she says. “We are all human beings, and we need to be treated equally. We need the government to protect us.”

Lydia Nekesa, a mother of five LRA children, is a former abductee who says her oldest son, Erick, was fathered by Kony. Erick has fled to the Central African Republic, she says. “I was rescued by herders in the forest,” she says, then motions with her hand, asking her youngest daughter to sit next to her. “When I arrived in my village after spending three days on the way with my children, we were attacked with machetes, sending us back into the forest. I was helped by a local administrator to start life again, but my son ran away after he realized people wanted to kill him.”

Nekesa, who is now a member of a group that fights for the right of formerly abducted women and children, is among the many Gulu women living in rehabilitation centers across the region. In Lango, a part of Gulu where women were abducted, village elder Francis Mugoya says many former abductees hide the identity of their children's fathers. "It's a huge problem here," he says. "People are not willing to accept these women and their children in these communities. But we're working hard to try and change their attitudes towards these vulnerable people."

That will not be easy. One Lango resident, who declined to be identified, says the rehabilitation centers were the best place for such women and children: "They can't live with us. They can kill us. They have bad blood they inherited from Kony's soldiers. When they come here [in this community], we will kill them before they kill us."

Gulu Mayor George Labeja says he is seeking to draft a bill that would protect abducted women and children born in captivity. He says that LRA soldiers abducted up to 15,000 girls over more than two decades and that around 5,000 are at various rehabilitation centers. "We expect the number to be higher because some of the victims are not willing to come out and register," he says. "The few who are already integrated in their communities after they hid their identities fear to come out and speak because they fear rejection if locals realize."

The number could also rise because more abductees are still escaping from captivity, he says. "We only have like 5,000 girls right now.... We expect more than 10,000 girls to come and join us."

Labeja adds, "These women and children born and raised in captivity are still struggling to have an identity in our communities. We are still looking for ways on how we can reintegrate them with these communities."

Until that happens, children like Sammy Katoo, an 8-year-old fathered by an LRA fighter, will continue to endure

prejudice and threats. “Other children at school tell me that my father killed their parents and burnt houses,” says Katoo, who lives at the Gulu rehabilitation center. “I don’t understand why they tell me things like this. I feel so bad.



Courtesy of Georgia Tech

VIDEO: ANTS ACT LIKE BOTH LIQUIDS AND SOLIDS

KIND OF LIKE THE T-1000 FROM "TERMINATOR 2."

Put a bunch of fire ants into water, and they'll link their bodies together to form a solid ball that can float on the surface, transforming into a raft-like assemblage. Put that ball of ants on dry land, though, and it will "melt" away as the ants decouple and scurry off.

These attributes—along with other amazing abilities, like creating bridges with their bodies that other ants can climb across—inspired a group of materials scientists and physicists to perform a variety of tests on the animals. Their primary question: Do ants act like liquids or solids?

The answer is they act like both, says **Alberto Fernandez-Nieves**, a physicist at the Georgia Institute of Technology who normally studies (nonliving) soft condensed matter such as liquids and gels. If you, for example, drop a penny through a slot into a container full of fire ants (and who hasn't?!), the creatures will move away and let the coin slowly fall to the bottom, as though it is passing through a thick liquid. On the other hand, if you softly press upon a ball of ants, the blob compresses slightly but will elastically rebound like a solid.

The team put fire ants into a device called a rheometer, which is normally used to test the physical attributes of gels and liquids. In one test, they compressed ants between two plates and then recorded what happened when they slid one plate past the other and back again. When this action was performed slowly, the ants acted a liquid and allowed the plate to pass without friction, but when the sliding happened quickly, the ants jiggled like Jell-O.

The findings, detailed in a study **published Monday** in the journal *Nature Materials*, could have applications for developing materials that might act like the ants. Such a material doesn't yet exist. But its attributes—the ability to be strong like a solid, to flow like a liquid and to self-heal from wounds or breaks—would make it highly desirable.

In a sense, the ants behave somewhat like the T-1000, the shape-shifting android assassin in *Terminator 2*, which could heal itself and become liquid when desired, Fernandez-Nieves says.

“We think that's pretty cool,” he adds.



Hulton Archive/Getty

*THE LAW CAN'T
KEEP UP WITH
TECHNOLOGY...AND
THAT'S A VERY GOOD
THING*

**NEW TECHNOLOGIES SPREAD INSTANTLY THROUGH
THE CLOUD, AND TAKE HOLD WITH ALMOST NO LEGAL
OVERSIGHT.**

In the 1910s, the number of cars in the U.S. exploded from 200,000 to 2.5 million. The newfangled machines scared horses and ran over pedestrians, who had never before encountered anything moving down a street at 20 miles per hour. The state of Georgia classified cars as ferocious animals. By the time any government could pass the very first traffic law, it had to accommodate cars. It could not stop them.

Today, thanks to political **gridlock** in the U.S., lawmakers respond to innovations with all the speed of continental drift. As government gets slower, tech is going the opposite way. New technologies spread instantly by cloud-based apps and social networks, and take hold with almost no legal oversight. Then, by the time government can act, it's usually too late to wind things back to the way they were.

And this, as it turns out, is terrific for tech startups, especially those aimed at demolishing creaky old norms—like taxis, or flight paths over crowded airspace, or money. Lately, the law vs. tech gap is making headlines as it upends the rules around sports gambling. The daily fantasy sports sites FanDuel and DraftKings are showing how fast technology can exploit the gap and put government on its heels.

FanDuel and DraftKings got their start when FanDuel's CEO, Nigel Eccles, noticed a clause in anti-gambling laws that allow for games of skill, which could arguably include fantasy sports. This year, the two companies perfected their apps, signed up major sports leagues and teams along with ESPN as partners, raised a combined \$575 million in venture funding, exploited the legal gap and took hold in the mass market.

So now government is **upset** about what happened when it wasn't looking. Nevada says the companies need a gambling license. The Department of Justice is investigating

the legality of the apps. Congress is harrumphing and rustling papers and saying it might hold hearings.

But the officials and politicians are probably too late. The real question for lawmakers is not whether FanDuel and DraftKings fit into old laws that apparently have more **holes** than Blackburn, Lancashire. It's whether they're willing to take action that would destroy the companies' \$2.5 billion combined value owned by important investors (and campaign donors) like KKR, Comcast, NBC, Major League Baseball and several Silicon Valley VCs. Oh, and maybe lawmakers will think twice before ending an activity enjoyed by around 50 million people, many of them the lawmakers' constituents.

If government had examined the fantasy sites a year ago, shutting them down or putting them in a legal corner would've been relatively easy. Because government was so inept, now it's the one in a corner. Speed to critical mass turns out to be a great strategy in the face of rickety laws and oblivious lawmakers. The faster companies move, the less government can get in their way.

This kind of thing is happening all around us. Drone aircraft are suddenly filling the sky, and a whole multibillion-dollar industry of drone making and drone services has taken hold. Now the Federal Aviation Administration is **scrambling** to catch up and make rules. If the FAA had been either farsighted or fast moving, at the first sign of drones it might've outlawed them or confined them to someplace like Oklahoma where they can't get in the way of anything too important. But now the FAA is forced to accommodate drones, not the other way around.

Bitcoin is another example. The technology has spawned hundreds of startups funded by billions of dollars of investment. It could remake the global financial system. Bitcoin is becoming so mainstream, in Las Vegas you can now walk up to a Mike Tyson-branded bitcoin ATM machine. (The New York Post, as only it can do, reported

the development **this** way: “Iron Mike Tyson has moved from bit ears to bitcoin.”) But have you heard the word bitcoin uttered once in any of the presidential debates? Government doesn’t even understand bitcoin, and that’s been really good for it.

Uber and Airbnb showed how to execute this outrun-the-government strategy. By the time cities understood what those companies were doing, it was too late to block or seriously limit them. New York **tried** to stop both, ran into outcries from its citizens and backed off. Other cities, like San Francisco, ended up passing laws that allow the companies to keep doing what they were already doing, as long as they pay some additional taxes.

Now there are certainly dangers in this gap. “A genuine public policy crisis for the new economy has emerged,” **writes** Larry Downes, an author and expert on law and technology. Like FanDuel and DraftKings, startups that outrun laws eventually wind up in some kind of distracting or destabilizing fight, often spurred by legacy businesses, such as taxi owners, protected by regulations and laws. Downes calls this “an epidemic of misguided efforts by incumbent businesses to apply old laws to new products and services.”

The other danger is the risk to society of ungoverned technology. An unchecked plague of drones buzzing around cities would be a problem not unlike cars on anarchic streets in 1916. We want to protect our privacy, the nature of our neighborhoods, our safety and our money from potential harm by new technologies. Coming our way soon will be some really smart artificial intelligence that some super-successful people such as Elon Musk and Stephen Hawking think might pose a danger to humans. They’re **calling** for laws or codes of conduct that would protect us the way we’re protected from nuclear bombs.

So to both protect citizens and at the same time allow disruptive technology to flourish, let’s get government to

stay on top of new developments in a smart, bipartisan,
forward-leaning way.

That was a joke.



David Walter Banks for Newsweek

AGING TRANS PEOPLE ARE SYSTEMATICALLY LOCKED OUT OF THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

**WIDESPREAD DISCRIMINATION AND A HISTORY OF
ABUSE ARE KEEPING A KEY GROUP OF SENIORS FROM
GETTING THE CARE THEY NEED.**

In the rural Pacific Northwest, 50 miles from the nearest city, lives a man who does not want to be found. He came of age during the 1950s, when saying you felt as if you

were trapped in a body that you didn't belong in—you were assigned female at birth, but you identified as a boy, say—would be met with at best dismay and confusion, and at worst brutal abuse.

At 14, with no support system in sight, he attempted suicide, depressed at the physical changes taking place in his adolescent female body. At 19, he began taking testosterone, starting the transition into the person he knew he really was. His family told friends “she” had disappeared and then introduced him as a male cousin who had moved to the area. He married, became a stepfather and went off to live his life as a man. He never told anyone about his past. Now in his 70s, he remains deeply closeted (even members of his own family aren't aware of his transition) and deeply isolated (his wife passed away).

Reid Vanderburgh received a call seven years ago from the man, who asked Vanderburgh—a 60-year-old retired therapist and writer who is trans and has worked with close to 500 people on their gender transitions—to help find him a doctor who wouldn't record his transition in his medical notes. Even a confidential paper trail of his past seemed too frightening to face. Vanderburgh eventually referred him to a physician and began to visit him regularly, making the 160-mile round trip from Portland, Oregon, with his wife, bringing groceries and providing a rare hour of social interaction here and there.

The man—whose identity Vanderburgh hasn't revealed to anyone—is part of a lost generation within the transgender population, even in a new age of visibility, where Caitlyn Jenner is largely praised and Amazon Studios's *Transparent*, a dramatic Web series about a father and retired college professor coming out as transgender, wins awards.

Related: Transgender Youth Don't Have Anything Wrong With Their Hormones

They are the ones who transitioned in the 1950s, '60s and early '70s—from around the time the first plastic Coke bottles appeared in stores through John F. Kennedy's presidency and the Watergate scandal, and long before the advance of sexual-reassignment surgical techniques. This was before transgender was even a word in the American lexicon; they never called themselves trans or dared associate with those who did. They made up backstories about their lives, moved away and acquired new jobs. Researchers call it “going stealth.” Now they remain cut off from the LGBT community: They cannot be found at community meetings or pride parades, and they don't show up in surveys or research studies.

Evidence of sex change operations can be found as early as the 1920s in Europe, but it wasn't until the 1950s that they were known in the U.S. In 1952, an Army veteran from the Bronx named Christine Jorgensen became the first widely known trans woman in the U.S. Born George Jorgensen, she underwent surgery in Denmark and made headlines the minute she stepped off a plane when she returned (“Ex-GI Becomes Blonde Beauty,” New York's Daily News said on its front page in 1952). Soon gender identity clinics opened in the U.S. at universities on both coasts, offering evaluations, hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery operations.

But discrimination against transgender people remained rampant. Even the doctors who performed sex-reassignment surgeries presented it as a treatment to get you from one gender to the next (mostly male to female). After the surgery, you were expected to disappear into your new body, if you wanted to live a happy and productive life. Socializing with other transgender individuals or even discussing the transition was discouraged. Instead, blending into society was emphasized. So thousands who underwent procedures back then ended up going “stealth” for most of their lives.

Those who attempted to live more openly were often pummeled. Marc, a clinical psychologist who works in the Los Angeles area, transitioned in 1979 at the age of 20. (He asked that his real name not be used in order to protect his identity.) A few years later, he started to come out in the comfort of a community led by two trans activists, Jude Patton and Sister Mary Elizabeth Clark, who were based in Orange County, California. They formed support groups and also threw pool parties and barbecues with a wide array of gender-nonconforming people at every stage in their transitions. But then a horrific event convinced Marc it would be better to disappear.

In 1986, his best friend, a trans man, was shot while he showered by the disgruntled ex-husband of his girlfriend. The killer testified at his **trial** that “a person that appeared to be a man with no penis or testicles scream[ed] at me, telling me to get the fuck out of his house, threatening me, and I had a shotgun in my hand.”

Traumatized, Marc retreated and went stealth for over a decade. It wasn't until the late '90s that he remerged and noticed that he had somehow become the oldest trans person people knew—and that there was no one talking about the health problems faced by senior transgender people. For the past few years, he has been educating LGBT care providers on the subject, covering awareness of special needs and the heightened risk of abuse and neglect this population faces in settings like assisted living facilities. “Trans people don't have families of origin. They don't have spouses, family or children,” he says. “If you don't have those people advocating for you, you're far more likely to be abused in a living facility or nursing home.”

Related: Falling in (and Out of) Love Is Complicated When You're Transgender

For this highly marginalized group, the idea of going into an assisted living facility is a nightmare. Michelle Evans's worst fears about care facilities came true just after she

transitioned. Evans, a 59-year-old trans woman from Orange County, knew from a young age that her body and mind were at odds, though it took her nearly a lifetime—over 50 years—to fully transition. About a year after she did, she broke both legs in an accident and was forced to stay in a nursing home after surgery. Except that no nursing home would take her, she says.



When Evans, who transitioned in her 50s, broke her legs in an accident, she was forced to stay in a nursing home after surgery. Most places wouldn't take her, and the one that did demanded she be treated as a man.

Credit: David Walter Banks for Newsweek

When she finally found one that would, it insisted on putting her in the men's ward. Evans protested and eventually ended up with a room of her own, but she says the doctor in charge told her that identifying as a female was "wrong." The doctor eventually stopped Evans's hormone treatments and even, in a fit of pique, took her off blood thinners—medication she needed after her surgery. Soon Evans developed dangerous blood clots in her legs. A friend finally intervened and took her back to the hospital, where

she was told she had only 24 hours to live—the clots had made it to her lungs.

She survived, but the experience left her traumatized. “It’s changed the way I view doctors. I don’t view [care facilities] as a safe place anymore, but a place where I’m cut off from people and that they can do whatever they want.” (She also ended up suing the doctor for malpractice; a settlement was reached in Evans’s favor.)

In 2013, Tarynn Witten, a professor at the Center for the Study of Biological Complexity at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), led a **survey** investigating chronic illnesses and end-of-life matters in trans-identifying baby boomers. Thirty-nine percent responded that they had no or little confidence in being treated with dignity and respect as a trans person by health care professionals at the end of their life. “I do not want to rely on strangers in the medical field that have little to no experience helping people with bodies like mine,” one survey respondent wrote. “The day that I need a caregiver, I will implement my end-of-life suicide plan,” another declared.

“This is a group of people who are very suspicious because they’ve been abused, and one of the main abusers is the health care system,” says Witten, who transitioned in the 1990s. “Violence and abuse is a kind of radiation background of our lives.”

It also has a severe health trickle-down impact: By avoiding health care professionals, these people put themselves at higher risk of dying from normally treatable conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes. In fact, studies have confirmed that transgender older adults **suffer** far higher levels of depression, disability and loneliness than nontransgender older adults. Seventy-one percent of transgender older adults have contemplated taking their own lives, compared with just **3.7 percent** of the general U.S. population.

Advocacy groups and researchers are increasingly aware of the unique challenges faced by a transgender aging population. For example, Services and Advocacy for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Elders, or SAGE, the country's only national LGBT organization concentrated on aging, **published a report** in 2012 on improving the lives of transgender older adults. Witten has also introduced a course on transgender medicine at VCU, which will begin this coming semester.

Related: Transgender Catholics Can't Be Godparents, Vatican Says

But the patients will also need to become better health advocates. Walter Bockting, co-director of **the LGBT Health Initiative** and a professor of medical psychology at Columbia University, says that success in later life for trans people can partially depend on increased interaction with members of their unique community. "The people who have more support and are connected to other transgender people do better," he says. "They are better able to cope with the stigma and discrimination that is out there."

Evans, who has mostly recovered from her ordeal (though there's permanent damage to her leg), is attempting to help facilitate these crucial connections. On every third Friday of the month, she leads a group called TG Rainbow, which meets in the Church of the Foothills in Santa Ana, one of the biggest cities in Orange County. Having come from all over the region, members sit on mismatched couches, sharing homemade cookies and stories of their past and current lives. The meetings include transgender people at all stages in their lives: the man who grew up in the Midwest knowing he was different for 58 years and finally transitioning at 70; the person who identifies as a woman inside but doesn't feel comfortable dressing as one, except at these meetings; the 20-something college student who is there with his mother and says he has finally made an appointment with an endocrinologist to begin the process.

“The only thing you need to transition to is yourself,” Evans says. They all nod in agreement.

Almost 1,000 miles away, Vanderburgh prepares for a weekend visit to the stealth trans man, the one he’s taken groceries to for close to a decade. Vanderburgh desperately wants to reach more trans people like him. He’s contemplating putting an ad in AARP’s magazine. But for now, as he makes the drive to visit his friend, something simpler and more immediate is on his mind: What if he arrives at the front steps with groceries in hand and the knock at the front door goes unanswered?

This article was written with support from a journalism fellowship awarded by New America Media, the Gerontological Society of America and the Silver Century Foundation.



Astrid Riecken/The Washington Post/Getty

SMITH ISLAND IS SINKING INTO THE CHESAPEAKE BAY THANKS TO CLIMATE CHANGE

**GOING DOWN WITH IT IS A FISHING AND CRABBING
CULTURE THAT'S 400 YEARS OLD.**

Twelve miles off the coast of Maryland's Eastern Shore, Tim Marshall and I knife through the salty, choppy waters

of the Chesapeake Bay in an aging white fishing skiff. It's a clear, bright August morning, and Marshall, slugging cans of Diet Coke, steers us straight for the approximately 4,500 acres of tidal marsh that make up the federal Martin National Wildlife Refuge. To our backs is Smith Island, the last inhabited offshore island on the Maryland side of the Chesapeake.

Marshall pilots us to the outer banks of the wildlife refuge, where the horizon is nothing but the blue waters of the Chesapeake and a faint speck in the distance—the remains of Holland Island, whose 360 residents fled rising waters and eroding soil in 1922, and which serves as a constant reminder to the people living on Smith Island that they might be frogs in a pot of slowly boiling water. Smith Island too is disappearing, its land eroding as it submerges into the Chesapeake.

Smith Island comprises the wildlife refuge and a stretch of islands directly south, where roughly 280 residents live in three small villages **about 5 feet** above sea level. But erosion nips away at Smith Island's banks at a rate of roughly 2 feet each year, and a **2008 report** predicted that by 2100 Smith Island will be “almost completely under water as the Bay's average level goes up nearly one-foot.”

Which is why, even though Smith Island emerged relatively unscathed after Hurricane Sandy hit in 2012, the state's Department of Housing and Community Development **offered Smith Island residents a buyout** to move. Most rejected the offer. Some, like Marshall, don't believe there's any risk to living on the island. “The whole sea-level rise—it's BS,” he says, talking loudly over the boat's motor. “I've lived here my whole life and haven't seen a difference,” he continues, then shakes his head at excavators on barges piling gray stone in front of the refuge's outer bank. Other Smith Islanders wondered why the state didn't offer to pay for new protective seawalls and

jetties and dredging projects to pile up sediment on the land they believe can be saved.

Most Smith Islanders believe the island can be saved—if there's the money to do it. There are already some man-made defenses built around the island's shorelines: A jetty protects the western side of Ewell; a bulkhead and riprap—piled stone that acts as a barrier between a coastline and waves—shield Tylerton. But over on Rhodes Point, on Smith Island's west side, a narrow island that acts as a barricade between the village and the Chesapeake is eroding away. While a jetty project designed by the Army Corps of Engineers is ready to go, federal and state funding to construct it has yet to be appropriated.

Even if the Chesapeake can be kept at bay, there's no guarantee islanders will stay: In the past 15 years, a growing number have moved out, seeking better opportunities on the mainland. The question today is what will vanish first—the island or its people?

Inaccessible by car, Smith Island is reached by a 45-minute boat ride from Crisfield, Maryland, to the east. Bridges and gravel roads connect the villages of Ewell and Rhodes Point, but the only way to get to Tylerton is on a boat. Smith Island is quaint: There are no chain stores, ATMs or police stations, and mail and supplies arrive daily by boat. Residents drive vehicles brought over by barge, while visitors usually navigate by golf cart or bicycle. A one-room school building accommodates children until they are ready to travel on ferries to the mainland for high school. The Smith Island Baking Company, responsible for Maryland's official dessert, Smith Island cake, is in Ewell. Most of the men who live on the island make their living on the water, crabbing between April and September, then fishing for oysters the rest of the year. In some ways, the island hasn't changed much since it was first inhabited by English settlers in the late 1600s.

As recently as the 1980s, it was still common for young men to quit high school and become watermen, but fishing for crabs and oysters has become more arduous over the last three decades. “It is difficult to make a living on the water,” says Sherri Marsh Johns, executive director of the Smith Island Cultural Center. “The pattern seems to be that our young people stay until they have children—then economics force them to move for better jobs.”

Today, just 276 people live on Smith Island. There are efforts to raise that number, but it’s hard to bring new residents to a place that, as Chesapeake Climate Action Network Executive Director Mike Tidwell **wrote** in The Baltimore Sun in 2009, “will almost certainly disappear even faster than the Maldives and faster than several much-publicized South Pacific island nations.” Global warming appears to be the bandit that can’t be stopped. The melting glaciers and loss of ice from Greenland ice sheets have contributed to the rapid sea-level rise in the Chesapeake. The Army Corps of Engineers estimates that some 3,300 acres of Smith Island land **have eroded** over the last 150 years. Currently, only 900 acres of the island chain are habitable.

For now, life on Smith Island carries on. “The island is going to be just fine. Our problem is we’re running out of people,” Marshall says to me on his boat in early August. As we head for Ewell, he makes it clear how he feels about media reports claiming Smith Island is falling into the Chesapeake Bay. He asks me if I’m familiar with Public Enemy. Sure, I tell him. He quotes: “Don’t believe the hype.”

But, in truth, Smith Island’s story seems to have been written many times over on other Chesapeake Bay islands: The last residents of James Island, formerly home to hundreds of settlers on 975 acres, left in the early 1900s. Poplar Island, once 1,500 acres and a former retreat for two presidents—Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman—is home now to just wildlife. And Holland Island today is

best known nationally for the photograph taken in 2010 of its final house falling into the Chesapeake, another victim of rising seas.



Bethesda Game Studios

*'FALLOUT 4' IS THE
MOST COMPLEX
ENTERTAINMENT OF
OUR DAY, BUT DOES
THAT MAKE IT ART?*

**"FALLOUT 4" WILL BE ONE OF THE MOST ARTISTIC
VIDEO GAMES EVER MADE. WHETHER THAT MAKES IT
ART IS UP FOR DEBATE.**

The air-raid siren wails. Its shriek drowns out the screams on the street. You clutch your wife's hand and run to the shelter. This is not a drill. Your neighbors panic. The bombs are coming. The door to the shelter won't open. The bombs are coming, but the door won't open. This is not a drill.

A flash, so bright you see the bones of your hand, and a violent, invisible force that throws you to the ground. Darkness. A terrible heat follows. A hatch opens beside you. You fall in. You smell smoke and singed hair. Blind and burning, your last thoughts are of your wife: Did she hold our baby tight? Blackout.

Welcome to Fallout 4—one of the most highly anticipated video games of the past decade. This isn't Super Mario saving his princess or a massive Minecraft map or a cascading stack of crushable candy. It is a richly layered, deeply constructed open world full of dystopian science fiction. Set in a postapocalyptic wasteland outside Boston, Fallout 4 takes place 200 years after a nuclear holocaust. Players assume the role of survivors who return to the surface after getting frozen in a vault. They squint into the sun as the vault door creaks open, tasked to explore this bizarro world that's part Lost in Space and part Mad Max.

Related: [APA Says Video Games Make You Violent, but Critics Cry Bias](#)

The opening scene described above is just a taste of what Fallout 4's creator, Bethesda Game Studios, has spent seven years designing. Fallout 4 features 110,000 lines of spoken dialogue (the script of Apocalypse Now is about 7,500 lines). It's estimated that players will have 30 square miles to explore, including a faithful layout of what Boston, from Paul Revere Mall to Fenway Park, would look like if it survived a nuclear war. In the time it takes to fully explore Fallout 4, players could watch the Godfather trilogy straight through 40 times.

Fallout's aesthetic cheekily evokes '50s-era sci-fi and the naïveté of early Cold War-era pop culture. The soundtrack, which will be available on vinyl, runs the gamut from malt shop hits to classical music to burn-in-the-fires-of-nuclear-hell gospel. Robots look more Ed Wood than Michael Bay, and in-game tutorials mimic the tone of those "Duck and Cover" safety films.

It's one of the most visually striking and narratively immersive games ever made. But despite its many artistic elements, some critics are hesitant to consider a video game, any game, a work of art. In 2005, film critic Roger Ebert wrote that "no one in or out of the field has ever been able to cite a game worthy of comparison with the great dramatists, poets, filmmakers, novelists and composers." Ebert argued that games are played while art is not, and that games are created to make money, not emotions.

The rebuttal to Ebert's argument comes, surprisingly, from Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia. In 2011, he wrote the [majority opinion for Brown v. EMA](#), a case about a California law that banned the sale of video games to minors. Video game fans latched onto the passage that read, "like the protected books, plays, and movies that preceded them, video games communicate ideas—and even social messages—through many familiar literary devices.... That suffices to confer First Amendment protection."

For Todd Howard, executive producer of Fallout 4 and the head of Bethesda Game Studios, there is only one reason some people wouldn't consider video games to be art. "They haven't played the right game yet," Howard tells Newsweek at the company's suburban Maryland studio. "What they probably don't know is that there are games for everybody."

Ebert eventually hedged a little. "It is quite possible a game could someday be great art," he wrote in 2010 in the self-effacing [editorial "Okay, Kids, Play on My Lawn."](#) Ebert's caveat was that no game had yet met the criteria for popular art.

Does Fallout 4 ? It is certainly popular. Poised to be one of the best-selling and most critically acclaimed video games of the decade, it's the biggest project to date for Bethesda. The game developer's 2011 fantasy epic The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim sold more than 18 million copies worldwide. Fallout 3 , released in 2008, has sold roughly 10 million. Both titles won game of the year at the Game Developers Choice Awards, an annual gathering of industry leaders, in addition to the dozens of awards the games received from industry press outlets such as IGN, PC Magazine and GameSpot.

Chris Melissinos, curator for the Smithsonian American Art Museum exhibit "The Art of Video Games," says video games must be art because they are made of art. "Inside a game like Fallout 4, you can observe landscapes and sculpture and orchestration and narrative arcs and principles of design," he says. "All of these things that, on their own, we put on a pedestal or hang on a wall or write into a book to be published."



A view of the game "Pac-Man," one of the 14 video games that are part of the "Applied Designs" exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art in New York on March 1, 2013. Credit: Jemal Countess/Getty

Howard explains how the team attempted to make Fallout 4 an immersive, artistic experience. "We look for elegance. Not simplicity," he says. "What we're trying to do

is what we think is best about video games. We're going to put you in another world. Who would you be? What would you do?"

In *Fallout 4*, the players make ethical decisions and determine moral consequences—often within classic sci-fi scenarios. If a robot looks human, acts human and thinks it's human, should it be treated like a human? Do colonies of irradiated lepers deserve to live in isolation or does the threat of a pandemic justify genocide? These moments are full of what Scalia called “social messages” and are born of literary devices as old as Karel Capek’s self-aware automatons in the play *R.U.R.*, which premiered in 1921, or Mary Shelley’s postapocalyptic plague survivor Lionel Verney from her 1826 novel *The Last Man*.

Related: [The Future, as Told by 'Call of Duty: Black Ops 3'](#)

“*Fallout* stands apart as an art form because not only is it narrative, not only is it artistically proficient, it is appropriating multiple areas of Americana and culture,” Melissinos says. “It's directly based on your moral compass, how you view the world and how you want to see things unfold. And that's why it holds as art. And it holds as some of the most introspective and personal type of art that anybody can engage in.”

Howard compares the experience of playing the game to watching a film. “In an open game like ours, the player becomes the director.” And where critics like Ebert might argue that a scenario in which a creator gives up control of his or her work takes away its artistic merit, the concept of participants changing the outcome of an artistic work also encompasses elements of performance art and goes back to at least the 1960s, when Brazilian theater director Augusto Boal invited his audience to become “spect-actors.” Boal’s typical performances involved a scene in which a character was oppressed by an antagonist, and audience members were invited to pause the scene, replace the victim on stage and

change the narrative in a way that resolved the conflict in the hero's favor. Sounds like a video game.

“Games can tap into that aspect that something live is happening,” says Drew Davidson, the director of the Entertainment and Technology Center at Carnegie Mellon University. “You have these wonderfully evocative experiences where you feel like your choices matter.” Davidson says the ETC was born out of a partnership with Carnegie Mellon's performing arts program and that its founders—a mix of technologists and theater buffs—saw video games as an extension of performance art, since both contain elements like setting, narrative and voice acting.

Howard says video games also have a unique emotional advantage over other media. “There is the range of emotions lots of entertainment can give you, from fear to excitement to sadness,” he says. “Games can do that. But the one emotion that only games can [create] is pride. Pride in what you accomplish.”

Though naysayers will continue to naysay, at least for now, Fallout 4's creators believe that games will prove their artistic merit. “There's no question what we do is art. And it's an evolving art, as all art over the ages has been,” says Istvan Pely, the game's art director. “It takes time to gain acceptance, but I think this will become the main medium for people to be entertained and to explore the human condition. Which is what art is all about—making people feel things and experience things.”

Melissinos, who included Bethesda's Fallout 3 in the Smithsonian exhibit, agrees. “It's a variety of all the different art forms,” he says. He adds, somewhat loftily, that games represent “the apex” of everything humans know about art at this point in the culture. “Video games are not only an art form; they are one of the most important art forms that have ever been at the disposal of mankind.”

Unlike other art forms, though, video games are not built to last—technology fades at a much faster rate than

plaster and ink. So while critics nitpick the lost meaning of a colored slab of dead wood, let's take time to engage the greatest entertainment technology of our era—regardless of whether it deserves space in a museum.



Yana Paskova

*R.L. STINE, MASTER
OF '90S KID HORROR,
ENJOYS AN
UNEXPECTED
RENAISSANCE*

**THE 72-YEAR-OLD AUTHOR MISSED KILLING OFF
TEENAGERS TOO MUCH TO STOP FOREVER.**

R.L. Stine has been murdering teenagers for 30 years.

Considered the king of young-adult horror fiction—he remembers being described as a “literary training bra for Stephen King”—Stine is best known as the author of the popular 1990s book series *Goosebumps* and *Fear Street*. In the same way J.K. Rowling introduced many a young millennial to the recreational reading rainbow, Stine’s prolific penmanship—at his peak, he was writing one *Goosebumps* and one *Fear Street* a month—is the core around which many ’90s kids developed a love of fiction.

Stine has continued to write since his heyday, and the 72-year-old author recently returned to his roots with a six-book revival of the *Fear Street* series, whose third installment, *The Lost Girl*, was released in September. *Goosebumps*, a movie based on that series and starring Jack Black as Stine, came out in October.

For a man who seems to know his place in the fiction canon—he has sold more than 400 million books—Stine is matter-of-fact about his popularity, a humility that seems in part tied to his family. Stine’s wife, Jane, is his editor (“It’s the worst,” he says, smiling), and his 35-year-old son, Matthew, has never read one of his books, despite helping with Stine’s website. “[Matthew] used to sell characters to his friends at school,” Stine tells me. “He’d say, ‘Oh, for \$20, you can be in my dad’s next book.’”

In the decades since Stine started writing *Fear Street*, much has changed for teenagers. Fortunately, they still have a great capacity for getting murdered. In his latest novels—*Party Games*, *Don’t Stay Up Late* and *The Lost Girl* have already been released; *Can You Keep a Secret?* is slated for April—Stine must account for the adolescent accoutrement of the modern world, in which help is but a Snapchat away. “Phones have ruined so many plots. It’s unbelievable,” he says. “You used to have a *Fear Street* where a girl suddenly gets these frightening phone calls. Now she looks, and she’s like, ‘Oh, he’s calling.’”

Stine finds ways to work around technology or write it out of the equation. In *The Lost Girl*, friends are foiled by the blocked number of a person doling out text message threats. In *Party Games*, a group of teenagers relinquish their phones when they go to Brendan Fear's birthday party on Fear Island, which has no service anyway. (Given that the town of Shadyside has a long history of murder involving the Fear family, it's beyond me why anyone still hangs out with them. "I always say, 'Why don't they all move from Fear Street?'" Stine asks, as though powerless to thwart the self-destructive tendencies of his characters.)

Ironically, as devices have made teenagers' attention spans shorter, their fiction is getting longer. The original Fear Streets were each 150 pages; those in the revival are closer to 250, and all of them are being released in hardcover—a first for Stine. "[Kids] got used to longer books. Bookstores want longer books so they can charge more, and they don't want paperbacks," Stine says with a shrug.

The commercial potential of the young adult genre isn't a new discovery—Stine and Ann M. Martin have been milking it for a long time, while more recently John Green has dominated the field—but YA in recent years has become a beacon of hope in an otherwise bleak publishing landscape. Children's and YA book sales **grew by 22.4 percent** in the first three quarters of 2014 over the same period in 2013, while adult fiction and nonfiction sales fell 3.3 percent. Some of the genre's success can be attributed to the blockbuster power of the *Harry Potter* and *Twilight* series, but YA is also finding broader appeal. A 2012 survey **found that** 55 percent of young adult novels are bought by adults. "There's a reason why adults read so much YA," Stine says. "It's for the story. These books don't have all the excess. People don't have that much time."

There's plenty of time for bloodshed, though. Over croques and Diet Cokes in New York's SoHo, we discuss

the feasibility of *The Lost Girl*'s first murder, a planned attack involving horses and honey that Stine calls "the most gruesome scene I ever wrote." "Do you think it would really work?" he asks me, as though I might bring some homicidal knowledge to bear. Later, Stine dismisses the notion that he might take the *Fear Street* relaunch as an opportunity to capitalize on other YA trends: dystopian futures, sexually confused vampires, postapocalyptic zombies. "I don't like writing zombies; there's not much you can do with them," he says. "You can't, like, hide them among normal people and then it's a big surprise at the end: 'Guess what? I'm a zombie!'"

Stine bats around story ideas like a man who has tons of them, although he says he came to the table with nothing when the *Fear Street* revival was announced. That's in part because he figured it would never happen. After years of tweets about the possibility of bringing the series back, Stine shopped the idea to several publishers (including *Fear Street*'s original one, Simon & Schuster) to no avail. "So one night, I [tweeted], 'Thank you for all your interest, but...no publishers are interested,'" he says. Ten minutes later, St. Martin's Press associate editor Kat Brzozowski messaged him. "She said, 'I'd love to talk to you about *Fear Street*.' And that's how it came back. Because of Twitter."

Brzozowski may have started a chain reaction: In October, Stine and 20th Century Fox confirmed that there will **be a movie** based on the *Fear Street* books. Still, Stine is calm about his renaissance. Perhaps that's because what could look from the outside like a professional roller coaster—a writer going from relative obscurity to mega fame to a question in a nostalgia-heavy *Jeopardy!* category about the '90s—was, for him, three decades of writing fiction continuously, all from the same 10-block radius of the Upper West Side ("I don't want to get too far from Zabar's"). Stine is most enthusiastic when discussing the murders of *Fear Street* novels past and the potential murders of *Fear*

Street novels future. “I missed killing teenagers,” he says. “I enjoyed that. Everyone enjoys that.”



Lisa Tomasetti/Sony Pictures Classics

REVISITING AMERICAN JOURNALISM'S BALLSIER DAYS

**THERE'S A NEW MOVIE TREND IN WHICH JOURNALISTS
ARE PORTRAYED—SOMETIMES CORRECTLY—AS
HEROES.**

I went to the former Soviet Union in January 1988 on assignment, and though it was a pretty tame story about children in the USSR, the photographer and I were monitored on our travels. When someone wanted to say something critical about the country or its leader, Mikhail

Gorbachev, they took me into a bathroom and turned on the fan.

How great it was to return to New York City, turn on the TV and see CBS Evening News anchor **Dan Rather grilling then Vice President George H.W. Bush** regarding his knowledge of the Iran-Contra arms-for-hostages scandal that originated in the basement of the White House. Bush had been told he would be lobbed softballs about education and his “vision thing” for his upcoming campaign for president, and instead here was that pesky newsman throwing hard ones right under his chin. “If this is a political profile, I have a very different idea of what one should be!” the vice president protested, live, before 32 million viewers. Hooray for democracy! I said to myself. Hooray for the First Amendment!

Whither Rather? younger readers might wonder, or perhaps: What’s CBS News? The litany of forces that brought TV and print journalism to its lowly state today needn’t be replayed here, and while you could argue the sometimes eccentric anchor was his own worst enemy (ending his newscasts by saying, “Courage,” telling his “What’s the frequency, Kenneth?” story), you don’t find many speaking-truth-to-power moments in American journalism now. The days of the crusading reporter are over.

Now several films seek to revive the public’s estimation of journalism, starting with *Truth*, in which Robert Redford portrays Rather at the end of his tenure with CBS. Redford would seem to be the perfect candidate for the job; his turn as Bob Woodward in the 1976 film of *All the President’s Men* launched a thousand J-schools and cub reporters across the country dreamed of taking down a president or at least winning a Pulitzer Prize.



Robert Redford plays Dan Rather in a scene from the movie "Truth."

Credit: Lisa Tomasetti/Sony Pictures Classics

In the years since, the portrayal of the press in film and TV has reflected the suspicions of the public. In the 1981 *Absence of Malice*, Sally Field played a well-meaning reporter fed a false story by the feds with bad results (the movie's one indelible image is of the woman Field smeared going to each neighbor's front yard to collect the morning paper before they've read it) and now a press badge in a movie usually screams "caveat emptor!" From Netflix's *House of Cards* (in which Kate Mara's DC journo sleeps her way to a big story until her source pushes her in front of a train) to the new season of Showtime's *Homeland* (in which Sarah Sokolovic blows off the suggestion her leaking of CIA documents will get innocent people killed), reporters are portrayed as vain, untrustworthy and easily misled.

Truth recounts the tale of Rather's last days and the story that brought him down. Based on the book *Truth and Duty: The Press, The President and the Privilege of Power* by former CBS News producer Mary Mapes (played here by Cate Blanchett), the film recounts in tick-tock fashion

the 2004 investigation into George W. Bush's time in the Texas Air National Guard—though “time” implies that he actually served while some hot documents leaked to Mapes indicate he did nothing of the sort. (The authenticity of the letters, most written by Bush's late commanding officer and disputed by his family, has never been established.)

The story seems jinxed from the get-go: The documents in question, letters to and from military brass about the MIA GWB, are photocopies; her source, retired Lt. Colonel Bill Burkett (Stacy Keach) won't tell her where he got the copies, and won't appear on camera; Mapes's bosses, while leery, push her to produce the story for 60 Minutes II in under a week (their constraints caused in part by a Dr. Phil special the network wants to run); and critics on the right are already convinced CBS and the whole liberal media cabal are working for U.S. senator and Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry.

The story continues to unravel (I imagine the fact-checkers at Rolling Stone watching this saga through their fingers), but I'll leave the movie's more dramatic turns to be revealed in the theater. For all the film's sometimes ham-fisted moralizing and occasional speechifying, Truth conveys the more boring parts of reporting pretty well. A key plot point concerns superscript—you know, that little thing in your writing program that turns the “th” after a number into a tiny th—and Mapes's crack investigative team (Dennis Quaid, Topher Grace and Elisabeth Moss) spend hours looking through boxes of contemporary documents, looking for examples created by a typewriter in the 1970s.

I know—I didn't dare get up to use the bathroom! But it turns out that such minutiae is a big deal in their investigation, and the constant pressure to tighten the story, edit the testimony of forgery analysts and rush the deadline do as much to damage the report as anything Mapes or her minions do or don't do.

But it's impossible to take this story out of the polarized political context in which it was born. Rather was already considered suspect by the right, due largely to what they deemed his disrespectful treatment of previous GOP presidents Nixon and Bush I, and the Internet enabled an army of trolls to vilify anyone critical of GWB. At one point in the movie, Mapes makes the mistake of reading the comments about her online before closing her laptop in revulsion.

Far worse than the dittoheads are the corporate stooges at the top of Black Rock, who eagerly sacrifice Mapes et al rather than risk any more blowback from the Bush administration. In one of the movie's soapbox scenes, the young researcher played by Grace chews out his former boss as the newsroom listens. The company's eagerness to sacrifice its news division has more to do with the looming Viacom-CBS separation, which the FCC would have to approve, than anything they did, he declares before being escorted out of the building by security.

Huzzah! A few of the press people at the screening I attended gave his speech at least a barking laugh of approval, though the financial realities have made monkeys of us all. Watching another news program cover their story, Roger Charles (Quaid) says, "This is what our business has become: reporting on reporting." And that's just their news rivals. The network of Edward Murrow and Walter Cronkite had become the network of Survivor: Vanuatu, and there was little doubt as to who would be voted off the island.

The loss of investigative reporting, or any kind of substantive reporting, is ours, Truth implies. Making a speech of her own before the internal investigators convened by CBS, Mapes says, "Our story was about whether or not the president fulfilled his service. Nobody wants to talk about that; they want to talk about fonts and forgeries, and they hope to God the truth gets lost in the scrum."

The truth can be as slippery as a rugby ball, of course, and the movie is at its worst when it acts as if it's scored a goal. The more nuanced and nimble *Spotlight*, reviewed by Alexander Nazaryan [here](#), tells the story of the Boston Globe's Pulitzer Prize-winning investigation into allegations of child sexual abuse in the Catholic Church. Like *Truth* it invokes the less glamorous aspects of reporting (cold pizza, archive rooms populated by dead rats) and makes heroes out of men (and at least one woman) in rumpled shirts.

The film became “a love letter to journalism,” director Tom McCarthy told an audience at the [Mill Valley Film Festival](#) on October 8. Newspapers “are just not supported in the same way” they were then, he said. “It's an American tragedy.... I don't think we realize what we've lost.”

The Globe's reporting broke the Church's record of silence on its handling of pedophile priests; what other institution could have done that? How many papers have the resources, let alone the tenacity, to pursue a story of that size?

It's too soon to tell if films like *Truth* and *Spotlight* will spawn a new generation of journalists (“The pay sucks and the business is dying? Where do I sign?!”), but it's nice to see reporters portrayed as something other than venal, as actual humans with complicated lives and a code of ethics. The profession seems to be getting something of face-lift, at least in the theater. The documentary [Hot Type](#) tells the story of *The Nation* (a magazine that has been hanging on by a thread for 150 years) while [Drunk Stoned Brilliant Dead](#) manages to make the creators of the *National Lampoon* look heroic, if you're one of those people who thinks Lenny Bruce was Jesus. Someone thought there was an audience for these films.

Now if that audience would just start subscribing to newspapers...



Gary Taxali

YOU'RE 100 PERCENT WRONG ABOUT MONDAYS

**THERE'S NO REASON YOU SHOULD START YOUR WEEK
PISSSED OFF.**

A confession: I despise Saturdays, a vast expanse of “free time” that is never really free, at least not if you have children, or responsibilities, or distant relatives who insist on having very long brunches during which they detail with courtroom precision the weekend they spent in the Vermont

woods. Nothing induces anxiety quite like the injunction to relax.

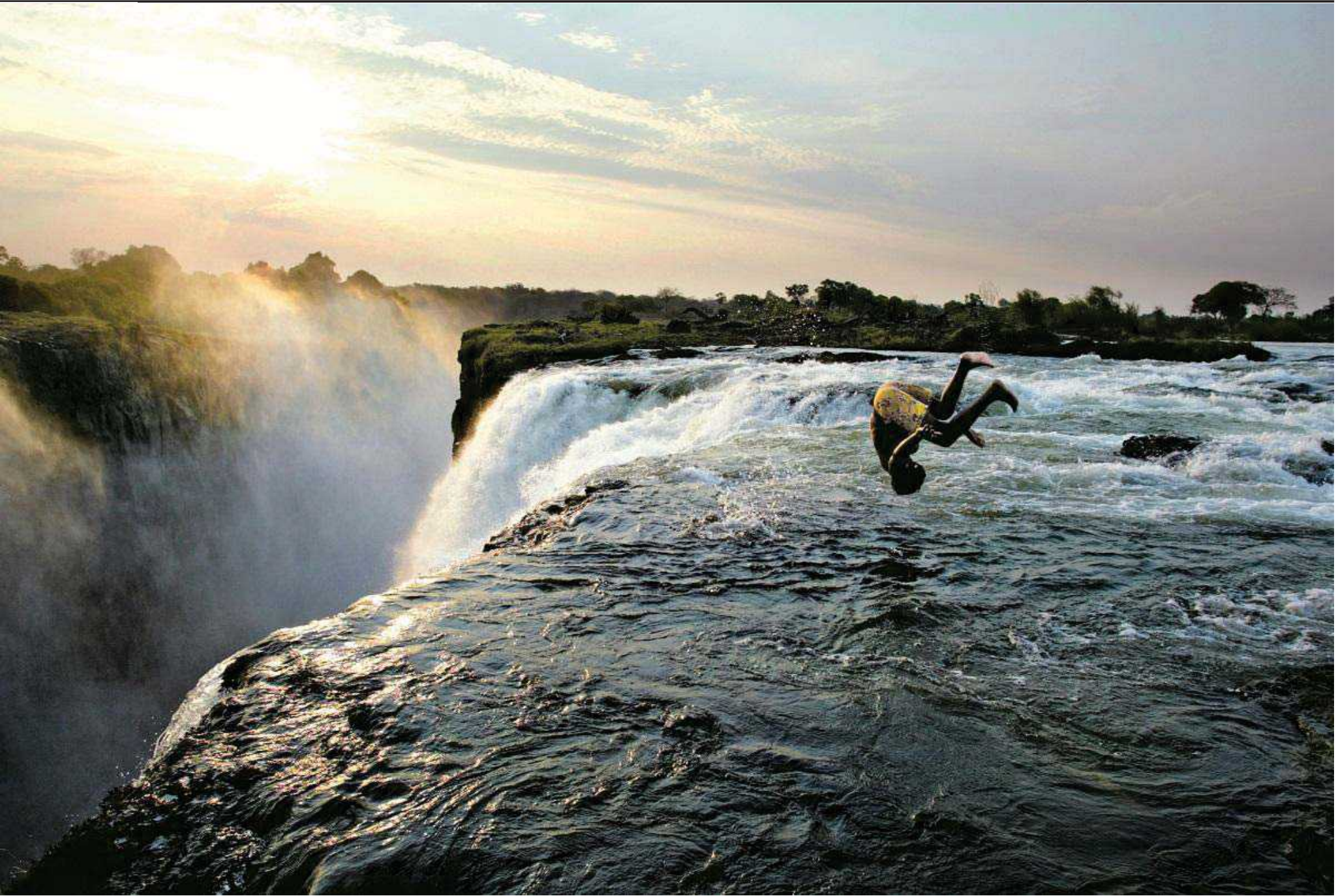
But I sort of like Mondays. I don't want to say I love Mondays, lest you think that I'm an Internet troll looking for clicks (or a magazine troll looking for subscribers—you get the idea), and that in order to get them, I will say outrageous things about Mondays and the national debt ceiling.

Monday is our clean slate, the absolver of past sins, promising the most American thing of all: a fresh start. Let the French have their languid mornings, their interminable August sojourns to the Amalfi Coast. We are a nation of Mondays—or at least we were, in the days of Rosie the Riveter, the days before “Netflix and chill.”

From an existential standpoint, hating Monday makes no sense. Mondays will constitute precisely one-seventh of your existence on this planet. It seems unwise to consign so much time—about 63,232 hours, if you live to 76 and sleep eight hours a day, by my calculations—complaining about the vagaries of the Gregorian calendar. Unless you move to Bora-Bora or become very rich, you will likely always live in a society with Mondays. And you will have to work on Mondays, and there will be an email waiting for you from that insufferable martinet in the Chicago office. Also, a long line at Chipotle. And no paper towels in the bathroom.

I am also convinced that our dislike of Mondays is more an assumption than a genuine sentiment, sort of like our collective dread of anchovies. The narrative is cheap, silly and above all degrading, suggesting that just because most of us have to work—and some of us do not love the work we have—we are incapable of retaining the basic optimism that should come with being alive. And whatever else the case, if you're reading this, then you're alive. That's pretty special, even on a Monday morning when a conference call with the aforementioned cubicle despot in Chicago looms.

And remember that there is Monday Night Football to close the day. So not all is lost.



Howard Burditt/Reuters

NOW IS THE TIME TO VISIT ZIMBABWE

**FOR ALL ITS TROUBLES ZIMBABWE REMAINS A PLACE
VISITORS CAN SAVOR AN UNSPOILED AFRICA.**

For a brief moment this past summer, the world's attention was focused on Zimbabwe. This was not a result of human rights abuses perpetrated by President Robert Mugabe's security forces, nor the country's full-blown economic collapse—but because a Minnesota dentist named shot dead a well-known lion named Cecil.

The **hunting of Cecil in early July** led to a storm of outrage and raised awareness of Africa's endangered wildlife. The mainly Western mourners of Cecil, however, were largely unaware that the lion population in Hwange, the country's main wildlife reserve, is thriving and that habitat loss is a far bigger threat to wild animals than American hunters. The African conservation community also saw it as somewhat ironic that a lion attack that killed the Hwange wildlife guide Quinn Swales soon after Cecil's demise passed without much notice.

A few weeks after both Cecil and Swales died violently in Hwange, I joined a small party of tourists on safari in Zimbabwe to see the territory where this drama was playing out. I spent some time in two of the country's best national parks—Hwange and Gonarezhou—and also visited some of the other stunning natural attractions, most notably Victoria Falls and the Matopos, the rock-strewn outcrop where Cecil Rhodes, one of the key builders of the British Empire in the Victorian era, is buried. European tourism to Zimbabwe was once one of the country's main sources of revenue, but since **mobs backed by Mugabe began** seizing predominantly white-owned farms in 2000 and bellicose anti-white rhetoric grew in intensity in the country's political discourse, many Europeans especially the British crossed off Zimbabwe as a tourist destination.

Now they are starting to go back to the country, mainly because despite its confrontational government's anti-Western ranting, Zimbabwe is a peaceful and friendly country to visit and the message has been getting out. Also, later this year the new Chinese-built Victoria Falls Airport is due to open, and this is expected to be a boon not only for Zimbabwe tourism but for wildlife holidays throughout this region. The Zimbabweans are hoping that the new airport will become an aviation hub for tourists who will disperse from there not only to Zimbabwe's wilderness areas but also

to neighboring Botswana, Zambia, Namibia and even South Africa.

Related: 'What Lion?' Zimbabweans Ask, Amid Global Cecil Circus

On this trip we spent our first two nights in Victoria Falls, staying at the 100-year-old Victoria Falls Hotel, which oozes colonial history and is just a short walk from the mighty falls. From the balcony of the Victoria Falls hotel you can sip gin and tonic, watch the African sun go down, hear the thunder of the falls and gaze in wonder at the massive clouds of spray, all of which inspired David Livingstone to utter those much-quoted words: "A scene so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight."

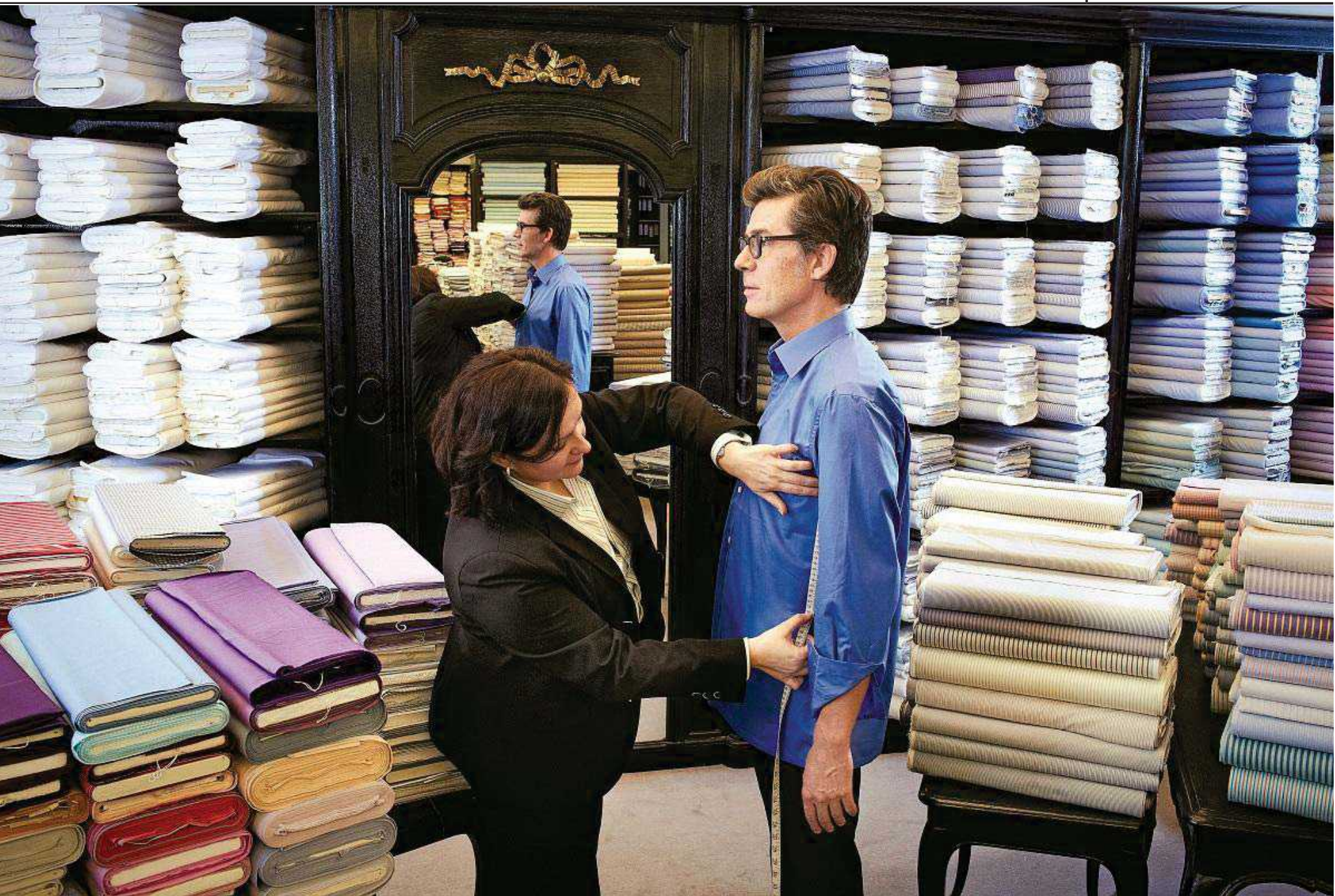
Hwange is a couple of hours by road from Victoria Falls; an early-morning drive had us installed in camp before lunchtime. Hwange boasts more than 100 mammal species and 400 bird types, and more than 450 lions are in the park, one of the most successful populations of any African national park. There are also massive herds of elephant and buffalo and a variety of ungulates, roan, eland, kudu. As a result, predators such as lions, leopards, cheetahs and wild dogs have flourished. And although the killing of Cecil had some impact on the lion prides in terms of territorial occupation there was not the wholesale infanticide that often follows the death of a powerful pride male. Jericho, Cecil's coalition partner, seemed to be holding on to the territory the pair had ruled over, and Cecil's sons, Xanda and Sixangani, appeared to be taking over a neighboring territory. We saw several prides during our four days in Hwange but were never able to track down those principal males. But we did hear them calling at night, their rich, resonant roars carrying for miles across the African bushveldt.

What we did encounter, in their hundreds, was elephants, with massive herds swirling around the camps we stayed in. At dusk and dawn, parades of giant pachyderms went to and from the waterholes near those camps. Here the

elephants seem habituated to visiting tourists and appeared unconcerned by our presence. By contrast, on the last four days of this Zimbabwe safari we encountered real wild elephants in Gonarezhou National Park in the country's southeastern Lowveldt. This is a region of spectacular 2,000-year-old baobab trees, scrublands and dramatic sandstone cliffs, a remote area that has never had many tourists, mainly because it is so remote and inaccessible. We stayed at Chilo Gorge Safari Lodge, owned by Clive Stockil, one of Zimbabwe's most celebrated wildlife conservationists and recipient two years ago of the Prince William Conservation Award in recognition of his pioneering work engaging local rural communities in wilderness protection.

Every time we closed in on a group of elephants in Gonarezhou, we were reminded by Stockil and his guides to stay still, speak in whispers and be aware that we were encroaching on their space. It was a fitting reminder of what Africa must have been like before *Homo sapiens* overran the wild places. There are few truly remote parts of Africa, such as Gonarezhou, that are left to explore, but it is reassuring to know that, for the time being at least, here in Zimbabwe there is some true wilderness left.

Graham Boynton traveled to Zimbabwe with the Ultimate Travel Company. A 10-day safari taking in Hwange, the Matopos and Gonarezhou starts at 9,000 pounds (\$13,870) , including international flights.



Bruno Levy/CHALLENGES-REA/Redux

CHARVET: THE VATICAN OF THE SHIRT

**CHARVET, THE WORLD'S FIRST SHIRT SHOP, IS STILL
WITHOUT EQUAL.**

Charvet, on the Place Vendôme in Paris, is not just one of my favorite shops—it is one of my favorite spots on the surface of our planet. Charvet is the sort of place where you can never imagine anything unpleasant happening. There is an Old World civility and a respectful hush that engenders in me the sort of spiritual calm that others seek in Himalayan monasteries or Indian ashrams.

Charvet is the Vatican of the shirt, where poplins and silks are pondered over in much the same manner that theologians debated weighty spiritual and liturgical matters at the Council of Nicaea. More than a shirt shop, Charvet is central to France's sense of identity: When General Charles de Gaulle, who wore white shirts with detachable collars that he changed three times a day, learned that Charvet was in danger of falling into American ownership, he shared this fear with Denis Colban, a cloth merchant, who understood what was expected of him. Colban did his patriotic duty and bought the famous shirtmaker. Today, his children, Anne-Marie and Jean-Claude, run the business.

I first pushed upon its famous plate-glass door about 25 years ago. I had, of course, heard of it, but nothing prepared me for the sight of an entire upper floor on the Place Vendôme piled from floor to ceiling with lengths of shirt fabric, and there at the end was a wall of white—or, to be correct, I should say whites. Not dozens but hundreds of different shades, cloths, weaves and finishes of white .

I tend to speak of Charvet as having 400 different whites, but Jean-Claude Colban believes there are “rather more,” and I suppose the next time I am passing and have a spare afternoon I will just have to count them. It is the sheer variety of white shirts available that makes me boil with anger when some soi-disant commentator on style talks about the basic simplicity of a classic white shirt; that's like talking about the basic simplicity of a white motor vehicle without specifying whether it is a car, motorcycle, delivery truck, tricycle or scooter.

Once you spend a bit of time talking to Colban, as I did on a recent visit, it becomes clear how even 400 is far from being a complete library of white shirtings. Speaking quietly and precisely, he describes a maze of variables that require a mathematical mind as much as sartorial understanding to navigate. “There are different weaves, different yarns, different conceptions of the same cloth,” he says. “Take a

simple, honest broadcloth; you may wish to have it very fluid and light, or you may wish to have it with a lot of body and very compact. You could give it a silky handle or a cotton-like handle.”

Colban talks of the relationship of weight to handle; of the difference imparted by one-, two- and three-ply yarn; and much more besides. Summing up with the open-mindedness of a philosophy lecturer and the evenhandedness of the diplomat, he says, “All these opinions on the same fabric are valid, depending on what you want to achieve.”

For Colban, the white shirt is also a playground of pattern. “The introductions of tiny jacquards and Dobby patterns are more elegant and acceptable on white, while in color we found them to be a bit”—he pauses to reflect on his choice of description—“far-fetched.” Which is about as close as he will get to saying that a colored shirt in a fancy weave risks vulgarity. Besides, he says, there is more than enough variation in color on a white shirt. Returning to his broadcloth to illustrate his point, he says, “It could be finished with a blue hue or a very yellowish hue—more suitable for Middle Eastern wearers, a pink hue [for consumers in the Far East] or purple hue [for consumers in America].”

Colban can, at times, see the map of the world in terms of its types of cotton. America is the home of Pima cotton, characterized by its pure, almost antiseptic whiteness. “Some people consider Pima cotton is the most suitable to produce white shirts because it is supposed to be very clean and not polluted by external bodies,” says Colban. By contrast, Egyptian Giza cotton is “very close to extra-long staple, so-called Sea Island cotton, and produces cotton with more light and elegance — but it can be affected by different bodies [or impurities], as it is hand-picked in Egypt.” Personally speaking, I can live with a few “different bodies” if it means the delicious, crisp silken feel of Sea Island cotton against the skin—as long as it is natural, as there is a tendency to

coat cotton with silicon to give it an unreal smoothness, and that can lead to imperfections in the seams of a shirt.

The joy of spending time in Charvet is that an hour can pass in this manner, debating the merits of the tiny differences that separate one white cotton from another white cotton. The beauty of the white shirt is that it is a field in which research is ever broadening the scope of human knowledge on the subject—and Charvet continues to pursue something of a shirt holy grail: a white that is whiter than any other white.

“There are two ways, theoretically, to achieve a very white level of white,” says Colban, the shirt master. “One is to use a whitened yarn, and the second is to weave a fabric and whiten the finished fabric. Just for our own interest, we decided to do a superwhite that was double-whitened using optical white yarn and, once the fabric was made, whitening that.” Alas, he says, the resulting “difference in shade was not sufficient.”

Still, looking on the bright—or do I mean white?—side, at least that means there is one less white to count the next time I find myself with time to kill on the Place Vendôme.



Erik Smits/Rijksmuseum

*RIJKSMUSEUM
EXHIBITION EXPLORES
DUTCH FASCINATION
WITH ASIAN LUXURY
GOODS*

A NEW EXHIBITION AT AMSTERDAM'S RIJKSMUSEUM TELLS THE STORY OF HOW 400 YEARS AGO, DUTCH SOCIETY WAS SWEEPED UP BY A PASSION FOR ALL THINGS ORIENTAL.

Picture this: A passion for luxury goods from the other side of the world enflames a newly affluent society; such artifacts are valued partly for their intrinsic beauty and quality but maybe even more as status symbols; local craftsmen and artisans spot an opportunity to produce and sell ever more sophisticated imitations. Surely I am talking about the contemporary craze in China for brands like Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Herms and Chteau Lafite. Or am I?

The fascinating exhibition "[Asia > Amsterdam: Luxury in the Golden Age](#)," at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, tells the story of how 400 years ago, following the founding in 1602 of the Dutch East India Company (VOC, from the Dutch spelling), Dutch society was swept up by a passion for all things Orientalfor Chinese tea, silks and porcelain; for Japanese lacquerwork; for Indian ivory and ebony.

At the very top of Dutch society at the time, the de facto head of state, Stadtholder Frederick Henry, and his consort, Amalia of Solms, acquired magnificent lacquer cabinets, still in the Dutch royal family's collection. The wealthiest merchants and landowners adorned themselves with magnificent silks and bought the finest porcelain plates, vases and vessels. These were depicted in splendid portraits, such as the one in the Rijksmuseum show of the VOC official Wollebrand Geleynsz de Jonghwearing an opulent silk outfitpainted by Caesar van Everdingen, and in sumptuous still lifes by the likes of Willem Klaesz Heda and Willem Kalf.



A 17th century cabinet, from the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Credit: Rijksmuseum

But the fashion and passion for high-quality Asian goods also spread throughout the world's first bourgeois society. Artists such as Rembrandt built up substantial collections of Oriental curiosities. Rembrandt's collection included shells,

stuffed animals, weapons and Indian miniature portraits, of which he made exquisite copies.

In an era of competing colonial European powers, the Dutch punched above their weight as traders and that global reach sparked and facilitated their desire for Asian craftsmanship. Though the VOC never succeeded in trading directly with China, it set up a trading post at Hirado in Japan in 1609. After the Shimabara uprising of 1637-1638 during which the Dutch cynically helped to crush a Christian Japanese uprising, Holland was left as Japan's only European trading partner, doing business from the tiny island of Dejima, near the city of Nagasaki. Dutch merchants made full use of their privileged position, establishing a booming trade in porcelain and the extremely costly lacquer.



A blue-painted dish, circa 1630-1650. Credit: Rijksmuseum

Of all these Oriental luxury goods, it was probably porcelain that made the greatest impression on the Dutch. Chinese and Japanese porcelain, far finer, smoother and more translucent than the earthenware made in Europe, seemed like a quasi-magical substance. Its ability to reflect light was captured with extraordinary virtuosity by Kalf. Homes in Holland were rearranged to display collections of plates and other objects. Very quickly, Dutch potters, especially in the city of Delft, began to imitate the blue and white Oriental porcelain in using tin-glazed earthenware and adding a second clear glaze, crudely at first and then with increasing sophistication. Though porcelain was not made

in Europe until the 18th century, Dutch blue and white ware became a phenomenal success from the 1630s onward.

Lacquer the ultimate luxury posed even greater challenges to European craftsmen wanting to produce homespun versions of valuable imported Asian goods, as the resin of the lacquer tree was not available in Europe and the manufacturing process less well understood. Nevertheless, enterprising artisans and entrepreneurs were not deterred: As early as 1609, Willem Kick applied for a patent to produce "all manner of lacquerware, like that brought in from the East Indies." Kick's efforts do not really compare with magnificent Japanese pieces such as the two cabinets from the Dutch Royal Collection, once owned by Albertine Agnes, fifth daughter of Amalia of Solms and Frederick Henry, which have very rarely been publicly displayed before.



A bow brooch, circa 1650-1675. Credit: Rijksmuseum

Another fascinating feature of this ferment of trade is how the luxury items became modified by the demands of the export market. The Japanese were at first contemptuous of the gaudy export lacquerware made for the European markets, calling it *namban* Western barbarian stuff. However, the Western liking for symmetry ended up influencing even the finest pieces.

There is a sense in the Rijksmuseum show of a society falling in love with objects not only more lavish but also more finely crafted than any they had seen before, and then of a joyful promiscuity of cultures and styles. Luxury

goods have often offended Puritans. In the city of Leiden in the early 18th century, university students were banned from wearing banyans, or Japanese "skirts," at Sunday church services. But this show makes a strong case for beautifully crafted artifacts as a force for good. It's hard to say whether Louis Vuitton bags, Herms scarves and fine bottles of Bordeaux, together with their Chinese imitations, are affecting China in quite the same way, but "Asia > Amsterdam" makes it clear that a nation's passion for beautiful objects from far away transformed a dour Protestant society and brought great joy into the lives of hard-working burghers.



An 18th century vest, from the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts. Credit: Rijksmuseum

01

EXTERNAL IMPACT?

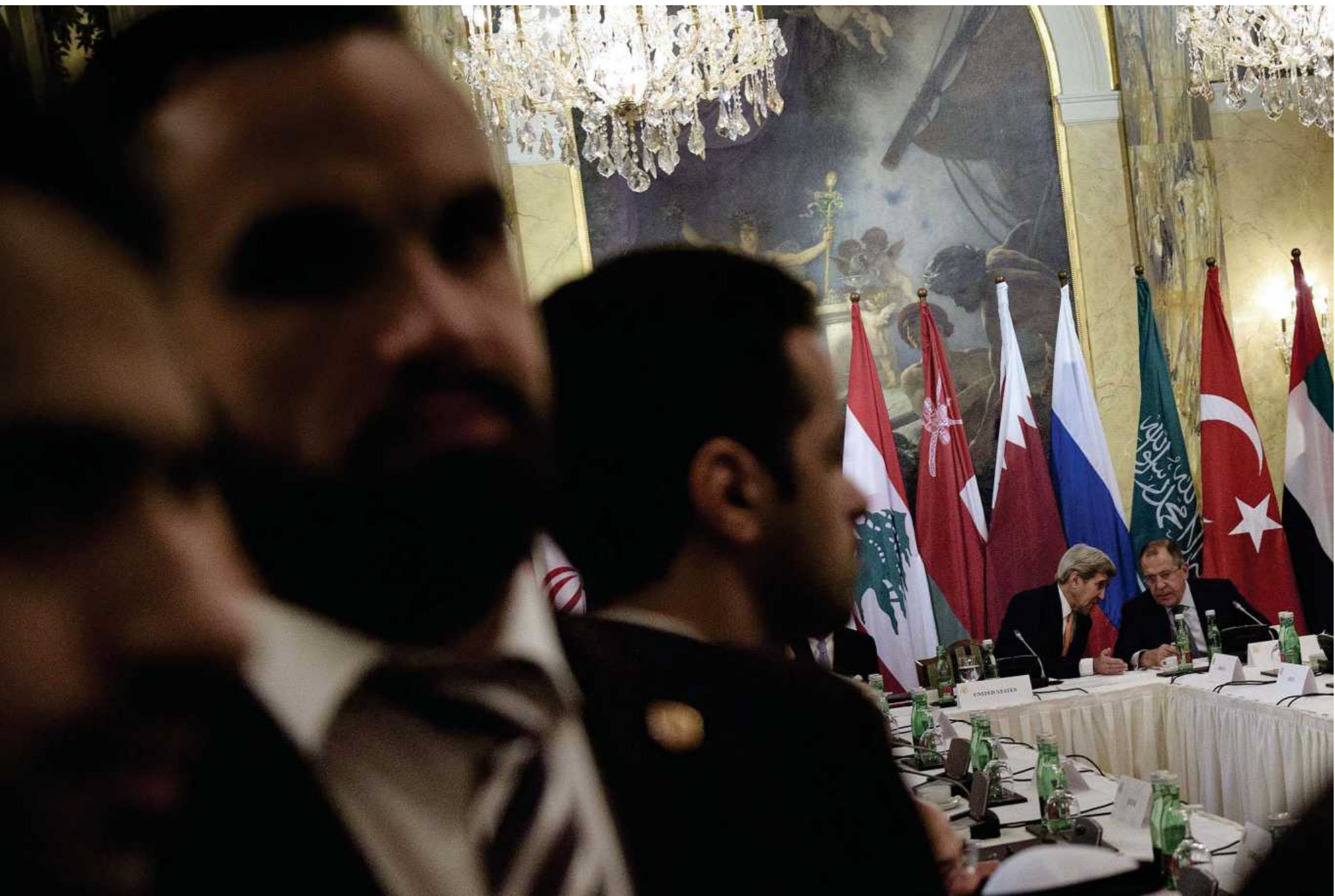
El-Arish, Egypt—Wreckage from the Russian Airbus A321-200 that went down en route from Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, to St. Petersburg, Russia, was scattered over several square miles of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula near el-Arish on October 31. All 224 people on board were killed. Senior officials at Metrojet quickly ruled out technical failure or human error, and they suggested an “external impact” could have brought down the plane. But the investigation was just starting when officials made those comments, and other investigators said it was too early to say what happened. ISIS claimed responsibility, but experts said militants in the Sinai do not have the kind of weapons necessary to hit a jet at that altitude.



02

OPEN TABLE

Vienna—U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry chats with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov before talks with 17 nations, the European Union and the United Nations here on October 30, to seek a political solution to the war in Syria. It was the first major diplomatic push to solve the crisis since Russia began airstrikes in September in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Iran was invited to the talks, despite the objections of Saudi Arabia and others who consider Tehran's support for Assad as meddling. The U.S. also said it would send dozens of special operations troops to Syria.



Brendan Smialowski/Reuters

03

FREE AND FAIR?

Yangon, Myanmar—Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the National League for Democracy party, greets supporters after an election rally in the Yangon suburbs November 1. The November 8 election is the first in the country since the end of military rule in 2011 and will be a test of whether it is genuinely moving toward democracy. Myanmar's constitution prevents Suu Kyi from running for president, but her party is expected to make a strong showing. She has vowed to lead the government from her seat in parliament if the NLD wins.



Hakan Goktepe/Prime Ministry Press Service/AP

04

SELFIE-SATISFIED

Konya, Turkey—Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu takes a selfie during a rally of his Justice and Development Party (AKP) here on October 30, the day before Turkish voters went to the polls for a parliamentary vote. By Monday, it was clear the AKP had won back the majority it lost in June, gaining 316 seats in parliament. That's just shy of the 330 seats needed to change the constitution to give President Recep Tayyip Erdogan more power by changing to a system with an executive presidency. Erdogan's growing authoritarianism has alarmed human rights and press freedom advocates, who say he is using the power to crack down on dissent and control the judiciary and media.



Hakan Goktepe/AP